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Grazelle Mae Viloria sets her sights beyond the sky's limit PAGE 3

Jorgensen nomination draws support, opposition. PAGE 7

$1

CCC board eyes new dates for IPI revocation hearings

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise, right, who is the Commonwealth Casino Commission board counsel, explains some procedures related to revocation hearings in the cases against exclusive Saipan casino licensee Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC during the board's regular monthly meeting at the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai yesterday.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission board is looking at either October, November, or December 2023 as possible dates to hold hearings on CCC's complaints that seek to revoke Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's exclusive casino license.

See CCC on Page 4

HANMI scrambles for options

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The CNMI's tourism numbers are slowly picking up, which is a good sign for the CNMI's wobbly tourism sector, but the industry

See HANMI on Page 4

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Hotel Association of the NMI chair Ivan Quichocho speaks to the media after yesterday's monthly general membership meeting of HANMI at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan. Although the media was not allowed inside the meeting, Quichocho was able to recap and share with the media some highlights of the meeting shortly after.

'Tourism making solid recovery'

» As of June, 125,957 total arrivals: 80% from Korea, 10% from Japan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's tourism industry is making some solid strides this year, with about 125,957 arrivals so far as of June, but the Commonwealth still has a long way to go, according to Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher Attao Concepcion yesterday.

Concepcion

In his presentation before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's hearing on MVA's budget for fiscal year 2024, Concepcion said total arrivals in the CNMI were about 424,838 in fiscal year 2019, right before the COVID-19 pandemic. That number dropped to about 215,125 in 2020, which is a steep drop of more than

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'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

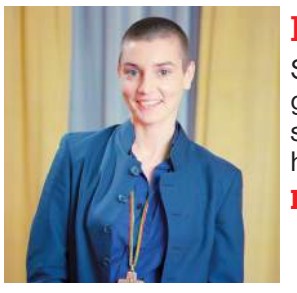
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

64

INSIDE

SUPPLEMENT
The Northern Marianas Insurance Association celebrates its 40th anniversary.
PAGE 13

BUSINESS
Kiara's Gift Shop relocated farther south along Beach Road in Koblerville.
PAGE 26



LIFE & STYLE
Sinéad O'Connor, the gifted Irish singer-songwriter superstar, has died at 56.
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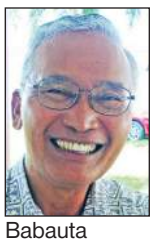
Local

Babauta: Law that created CHCC board needs to be revisited

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former governor Juan N. Babauta would like to see a financially robust Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. so that the hospital and the health centers on Tinian and Rota can deliver better health care for the people of the CNMI.

CHCC's financial status was one of the four areas that Babauta mentioned he would focus on during last Wednesday's confirmation hearing by the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee on his appointment to serve as a member of CHCC's board of trustees, representing Saipan and Northern Islands.


Babauta

Secondly, Babauta said, he would like to work on improving the health status of the people of the CNMI. "That's a very broad statement and a very broad issue and I'm happy to get into those issues," he said.

By looking at the health status of people in the CNMI, it is an indicator of the kind of healthcare delivery system that they should need to provide for people, the former governor said.

Third, Babauta said, he wants to improve the quality of healthcare by adopting best practices. He said it's always good to look at other jurisdictions' way of doing business and delivering healthcare to people.

"And it will be in that kind of direction that I will be working with other colleagues on the board should I be approved by this committee and the [full] Senate. To be working with other members closely," he told the committee chaired by Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan).

Lastly, Babauta said, he would recommend revisiting Public Law 19-78, which is the law that amended the previous law that created the healthcare corporation.

Signed by then-governor Ralph DLG Torres in December 2016, Public Law 19-78 established the CHCC board of trustees, which is vested with managing and controlling the operations, functions, and activities of the CHCC.

Torres, however, had reservation in enacting the law at that time. He advised the Legislature to pass legislation that ensures the governing board is in compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regulations in order for CHCC to continue to receive federal funds from Medicare or Medicaid for patients.

Babauta underscored the need to revisit some of the provisions of the law to further clarify the rules between the CNMI government and CHCC in the delivery of healthcare in the CNMI.

The former governor said he feels that the delivery of healthcare in the CNMI requires a very strong and unwavering partnership between the government and CHCC. "Without this partnership, CHCC cannot do it alone. There's just no doubt about that. Both have critical roles that need to be made clear and concise," he added.

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Grazelle Mae Viloria sets her sights beyond the sky's limit

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Among the small number of women who have completed their courses at the University of California Irvine's Henry Samueli School of Engineering, a homegrown daughter of the CNMI is making the islands proud after graduating with a degree in the rarefied field of aerospace engineering.

Twenty-two-year- old Grazelle Mae Viloria from Saipan was one of the small number of women in her entire Class of 2023 to complete and graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering last June 16, 2023. There were fewer than 15 women who graduated in Viloria's entire class and she takes pride in being one of them.

It was her dad who inspired her to pursue engineering. "It grew from wanting to follow in my dad's footsteps of becoming an engineer, my love of seeing airplanes fly, one day contributing to the advancement of space exploration, and inspiring the next generation of young women to pursue an engineering degree," Viloria said.

As a child born and raised on Saipan, Viloria is an alumna of the San Vicente Elementary School, Eucon International School where she attended middle school, and later at Grace Christian Academy until her junior year of high school when she relocated to the United States and went to the Colony High School in Ontario, California. She graduated high school with high honors in May 2018 and was soon accepted to the University of California Irvine's Aerospace Engineering Program.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Grazelle Mae Viloria from Saipan graduated from the University of California Irvine's Henry Samueli School of Engineering last June 16, 2023, with a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering.

After a gap year in the United States, Viloria began taking classes at UCI in the fall of 2019, and began getting involved in a number of university project teams to build small-scale airplanes and satellites. She also secured an internship with an aerospace company the summer after her junior year. Her final senior project was a conceptual design for a commercial aircraft.

All these successes came with some challenges, Viloria said. " I was a working student all four years of college (working part-time and going to school full-time), in addition to receiving multiple scholarships that helped cover the cost of attending university," she said.

In her final year at the university, Viloria was able to land numerous job interviews from top aerospace and defense/space companies and even received three job offers before the end of the school year.

"Although it was an extremely tough decision to choose between the three offers, I [eventually] accepted a manufacturing engineering position with Lockheed Martin," she said. Viloria will be joining the company in the next few months.

Part of her future plans is "to gain as much experience and knowledge as an early-career engineer in my field, so that I may contribute to the advancement of aerospace technology and space exploration."

Viloria also made sure to note that she couldn't have done any of these accomplishments on her own, but expressed her gratitude for her family friends and community who raised her, crediting them for her successes. "I wouldn't have gotten through this major without the support of my family and friends. I also would not have been as academically-driven if not for my professors, teachers, previous supervisors, and mentors throughout my academic career. I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to every single one of you, as you have each contributed to my successes. There are honestly too many of you to count."

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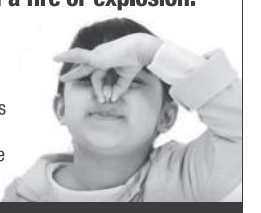
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Updated EEOC resource about ADA, visual disabilities at work

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has released an updated technical assistance document, "Visual Disabilities in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act," explaining how the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to job applicants and employees with visual disabilities.

The document outlines when an employer may ask an applicant or employee questions about their vision, how an employer should treat voluntary disclosures about visual disabilities, and what types of reasonable accommodations those with visual disabilities may need in the workplace. The updated document highlights new technologies for reasonable accommodation, many of which are free or low-cost, and describes how using artificial intelligence and algorithms to make employment decisions can impact individuals with visual disabilities.

The document addresses how an employer should handle safety concerns about applicants and employees with visual disabilities and how an employer can ensure that no employee is harassed because of a visual disability.

"The ADA became law 33 years ago today and continues to provide vital protections for workers, including those with visual disabilities," said EEOC chair Charlotte A. Burrows. "Providing reasonable accommodations is an employer's responsibility. Workers who have vision impairments, including limited or low vision, should be provided the resources needed to succeed. This document will provide employers the guidance to do so."

Many individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or have other vision-related conditions can perform successfully on the job and should not be denied opportunities because of stereotypical and generalized negative assumptions. The document also discusses harassment and retaliation.

Recent EEOC news releases about individuals who are blind or have vision impairments or other vision-related conditions and sought reasonable accommodations as applicants or employees are available in the EEOC's newsroom.

More information about disability discrimination is available on EEOC's disability discrimination landing page: https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc-disability-related-resources. For a resource on workplace accommodations, visit https://askjan.org/.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov. ***(EEOC)***

HANMI

From page 1

is also facing some pretty serious challenges down the line this year, according to Hotel Association of the NMI chair Ivan Quichocho.

Speaking to the media after yesterday's monthly general membership meeting of HANMI at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Quichocho said the meeting was productive as they discussed the major challenges HANMI is facing, especially with so many foreign workers leaving starting in September due to the touchback rule—an immigration requirement for foreign workers.

"We're on skeletons crews. A lot of the properties have moved down to skeletons crews," he said.

Some of the options they are considering are the tourist professionals at the Latte Training Academy, Northern Marianas Technical Institute, and the Northern Marianas College, as they continue to churn out professionals who may want to get into the tourism industry.

Quichocho said that HANMI is also hoping that the CNMI delegation that is in Washington, D.C. right now—composed of representatives of HANMI, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and Commonwealth Ports Authority—for a "door knocking" campaign will result in some positive news.

"We're extremely hopeful that they're successful in delivering that message. I think they were, but we're hopeful that something can come of it, like maybe a delay or extension [in the touchback rule]…" he said, adding that HANMI also submitted letters to the office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to support pushing back the touchback requirement.

When asked about HANMI's stance on the touchback requirement, he said, "Quite frankly we don't want to see a touchback."

He noted that the CNMI has just opened its tourism "…so as we are starting to pick up steam, we continue to face challenges on our horizon and rough seas. …We're fielding losses, and then you add on the expenses, you add a shortfall of key staff. …So all of these stacked up one on top the other, it can be pretty devastating to the industry."

It is good that tourist numbers are climbing, but Quichocho said they are also dealing with a loss of manpower.

Add to that the CPA's efforts to secure funding from the Federal Aviation Administration for the airport to continue to operate Essential Air Services. "One thing that you're not hearing too much of is that if the airport doesn't secure funding, the fees come September is going to be crazy expensive. That is going to get passed to the airline, which is going to do one of two things—either pass it to the customer or decide whether they can afford it or whether the consumer can carry that kind of a cost for this destination. So it really calls to question the viability of the route."

When considering the concerns of HANMI as they move forward, he said they are dealing with the issue of construction and access to construction, the need to improve a product—in this case Saipan as a destination spot—the need for renovations and general facelift

"Number 1 is the cost. No. 2 is access. No. 3 is our manpower…then you have looming potential for increased cost through taxation, and then access to tourists—if CPA is going to be able to get the funding support from FAA or not. What is that going to mean for the airlines? What does it mean for ticket prices or operating costs for the airline to come to Saipan? So just those items alone are pretty heavy…"

Despite the swarm of challenges facing the industry, Quichocho believes that "there are a lot of smart people on this island that, if we can get together and kind of divvy up the target approach, all of this stuff can be overcome. It can be. Just got to get focused."

On the bright side, he shared that Korean air service is picking up, with 29,000 air seats in July. Part of them were diverted flights that came to Saipan instead of Guam because of Typhoon Mawar.

But he believes that, in terms of air seats, the Korean market will be at 80 to 90% of pre-pandemic numbers by the end of the year.

"…We're thinking it's going to be around 80% to 90%t of what the seats were pre-pandemic by the end of the year. So the final quarter—October, November, and December—we anticipate that the air seats should be around 30,000 seats a month, a thousand seats a day, roughly for the Korean market. Japan will continue to be three times a week moving through another year, and… if you look at the stats, it's starting to pick up some steam. The MVA's been working very hard to fill those flights." In June, flights were performing at 74%, he said, July was at 72%, and August bookings are looking good.

Although the media was not allowed inside the meeting, Quichocho was able to recap and share with reporters some highlights of the meeting shortly after.

CCC

From page 1

This would allow the prosecution to complete all the paperwork for the refiling of the revocation matter, according to the commissioners at the CCC board's regular monthly meeting at the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai.

In a later interview, CCC commissioner Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero said IPI that brought to the U.S. District Court for the NMI the five cases filed by the commission against the company that were originally scheduled for hearings before the board.

DeLeon Guerrero said the federal court issued a temporary restraining order and subsequently an injunction, prohibiting the CCC from revoking IPI's casino license while the casino investor pursues its right to arbitration.

The CCC then appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, asking to have the federal court's ruling reversed, which the appeals court later granted.

With that decision, DeLeon Guerrero said they are now back to rescheduling the revocation hearings. He said, though, that their legal counsel, assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise, had informed them that IPI had filed another request for reconsideration.

"I guess that's something that we're going to be discussing in the executive session," he said.

DeLeon Guerrero said they don't know what will transpire from IPI's request for reconsideration.

He pointed out that the Ninth Circuit already issued decided that this revocation hearing is not subject to arbitration, so the federal court's injunction that ordered them to participate in the arbitration was incorrect.

"So now we are back to recommend what we previously had attempted," he said, referring to the scheduling of the revocation hearings.

DeLeon Guerrero said a lot could happen between now and then as he understands that IPI is also trying its best to resolve some of its obligations.

"I can't go into details with those. But if they do, they need to perform, take care of their obligations…responsibilities," he said.

The chair said there will be no need for the revocation hearings if IPI satisfies the matters that originally prompted the CCC enforcement actions:

- IPI's alleged continuing failure to pay the 2020 annual license fee and related failure to adhere to a CCC order;
- IPI's alleged failure to comply with CCC order to reserve a working capital (cash) for three months payroll and other obligations;
- IPI's alleged continuing failure to pay the 2020 casino regulatory fee and failure to adhere to a CCC order for an immediate payment of the fees, among other things.
- IPI's alleged failure to pay the 2021 annual license fee.
- IPI's alleged failure to pay the 2021 regulatory fee.

Each complaint asked the CCC board to revoke IPI's exclusive casino license, among other things.

TOURISM

From page 1

200,000. This further dropped to a staggering 5,000 in fiscal year 2021.

Starting last year, though, arrivals rose to 23,815 and the ensuing numbers are showing signs that the CNMI's main economic driver is making positive strides in regaining lost ground, Concepcion said. He said they are expecting an additional 65,000 arrivals this July, August, and September, so for the whole year they are hoping to reach 200,000 total arrivals.

Of the total 125,000 arrivals in the first six months of this year, roughly 80% of the visitors came from Korea, while 20% is comprised of visitors from Japan, Guam, the United States, and all others. He said the CNMI only received 5,000 arrivals from Japan this fiscal year.

Since 1978, the CNMI's highest total arrivals was in 1997, which was about 727,000.

For fiscal year of 2024, Concepcion said they expect 310,000 arrivals from Korea, 10,000 from Japan, and another 10,000 from other markets—or roughly 330,000 to 340,000 in total arrivals.

He said for Korea, they are expecting the current flights schedule to be maintained, which is 34 flights a week.

The managing director said that load factors (or how full incoming planes are) are pretty good now, but they're expecting that to increase especially during the high season.

In light of these positive outlook for the tourism industry, MVA is proposing a budget of $12,524,928 in fiscal year 2024. MVA's fiscal year 2023 budget is only $1,550,872.

Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) said that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is proposing to resume earmarking the Hotel Occupancy Tax, which is estimated at $4,584,000, to MVA.

Concepcion said for next fiscal year, with visitor arrivals picking up and federal grants given during the pandemic are running out, they fully support the governor's reinstatement of HOT so that they can continue their mission to rebuild a vibrant tourism economy.

Concepcion agreed with Manglona that the projection for next fiscal year on visitor arrivals will result in $4.5 million HOT collections.

"That's a very good conservative estimate. We're thinking it'll definitely be up and above that. Maybe 50% or more than $4.5 million," said the managing director, adding that the projection is that arrivals will be picking up every month.

He said the last of their American Rescue Plan Act funding is covering the cost of their representative offices in Korea and Japan.

Concepcion said they do have part of the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds, administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corp., but this is only for very specific marketing programs.

He said they do have a small Technical Assistance Program grant that they got from the Office of Insular Affairs to upgrade their data systems.

MVA is also requesting right now to become a co-grantee of an Economic Development Administration grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce for destination enhancements. "These funds can be only be used for very specific activities and they've been encumbered for these purposes," Concepcion said.

For personnel, operations, and most of their marketing efforts, they remain completely reliant on local funding at this point, he added.

Of the $1.55 million appropriated to MVA this year, they have only received from the Department of Finance $200,000 so far, he said.

Jury trial set for illegal alien charged with firearm possession

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The jury trial of an illegal alien, MD Ikbal, who was indicted for allegedly illegally possessing a firearm, has been set for Sept. 6, 2023, at 10am.

Ikbal appeared before U.S. District Court for the NMI magistrate judge Heather Kennedy in July 2022 for his initial appearance, during which Ikbal pleaded not guilty to the charge of illegal alien in possession of a firearm.

In a competency hearing on July 26, Ikbal appeared before District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona.

Court-appointed counsel David Banes confirmed with the court that the parties received and reviewed the defendant's evaluation report. Banes apprised the court that the parties agreed to setting this matter for a jury trial, which is anticipated to last three days.

Ikbal was hospitalized but has now recovered and is said to be able to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him. He was ordered by the court to be discharged from where he is hospitalized.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Ikbal was indicted by a grand jury last June 28, 2022.

The indictment states that Ikbal, "on or about May 5, 2022, then being an alien illegally and unlawfully in the United States, did unlawfully, willfully, and knowingly possess a firearm, to wit, a .40 caliber handgun, Glock model 22, serial number WHZ254, in and affecting interstate commerce."

The indictment states that, if he is convicted, Ikbal must forfeit any firearm he possesses.

"He shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(d) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c): any firearms and ammunition involved in the commission of the offense, including, but not limited to the .40 caliber, model Glock 22 handgun, serial number WHZ254," court documents state.

It was learned that Ikbal has pending criminal charges in the CNMI Superior Court and a bench warrant has been issued against him.

Man pleads not guilty to strangling woman

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man accused of strangling a woman and threatening her with a knife has pleaded not guilty during an arraignment hearing on Monday in the Superior Court.

Jimmy Serandio, who was on probation after previously pleading guilty to assaulting his wife, has been arrested again by the police for allegedly assaulting the same victim, and has pleaded not guilty to the current charges of assault with a dangerous weapon, strangulation, assault and battery, disturbing the peace, and interfering with a domestic violence report.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja scheduled Serandio's status conference for Aug. 16 at 10am with Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho.

According to court documents, the victim had called police to meet her at a bus stop in San Antonio last June 30 to report the alleged attack.

The victim claims that the incident had happened on June 28, but she was unable to call the police as Serandio had allegedly taken her phone away. The victim also claimed that Serandio would not let her go to work so she couldn't report him for the assault.

The victim told police that at around 9pm on June 28, she and Serandio got into a fight after she and their children returned home from the beach. The victim said Serandio was accusing her of cheating.

The victim said that, during the altercation, Serandio grabbed a nearby knife and threatened to kill her. The victim said Serandio then grabbed her hand and pulled her into their bedroom where he slapped, kicked, and strangled her.

The victim told police that she could not breath and feared for her life. The victim said she managed to kick Serandio off her after he had been choking her for a few minutes. She claims she tried to call the police immediately after, but Serandio took her phone away.

The Superior Court imposed a $10,000 cash bail last July 3 on Serandio and remanded him to the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Job Vacancy Announcement

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- Prepare drawings from conceptual plan to Development Plan and construction record drawings;
- Make sure of CAD to prepare engineering drawings consisting of plans, sections, and details from rough sketches to established standards and procedures;
- Ensure compliance with required design safety factors, tolerances, and specifications.

Requirements
- Associate's Degree or Equivalent; Major(s) and/or field(s) of study in Architecture/Architectural Studies/Eco-Friendly Architecture.
- At least 24 months of work experience as a graphic designer is required;

Please send a resume and transcript to
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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Pacific Basin Insurance Company
THE POSITION: Senior Insurance Underwriter
NUMBER OF OPENINGS: 1

JOB DESCRIPTION: Examine documents to determine degree of risk from related factors, such as financial standing and value and condition of property; Decline excessive risk or if it does not conform with the guidelines or if exposures are extremely high, obtain further information, quote rates, or explain company underlying policies; Determines the appropriate premiums, amounts of coverage, and other policy terms and conditions; Evaluate possibility of losses due to catastrophes or excessive insurance from underwriting guidelines; Review company records to determine amount of insurance in force on single risk or group of closely related risks; Process the insurance policies and related invoices; Monitoring of portfolio.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION: Must have a Bachelor's Degree in Business, Economics, or Finance.
EXPERIENCE: Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as an Insurance Underwriter.
OTHER SPECIAL SKILLS OR REQUIREMENTS: Must be results-driven, dedicated, independent, and hardworking; Must be technically-equipped underwriter for liability and other casualty lines; and Must be knowledgeable in claims-handling and business development.
JOB SITE: Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HOW TO APPLY: If interested, please submit or mail application and comprehensive resume, with supporting credentials to:

JOSEPH C. REYES
President
PACIFIC BASIN INSURANCE COMPANY

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Camacho backs Youth Summer Sports Blitz program

The 19th CNMI Youth Congress hosted the first ever Youth Summer Sports Blitz program at the Oleai Sports Complex, with a total of 50 youth participants ranging in ages from 10 to 17 years old taking part in various exercises and sports activities.

Spearheaded by youth senator Filomenaleonisa Iakopo, who chairs the Sports and Recreation Committee, the participants played soccer, volleyball, basketball and track, under the supervision of expert trainer Peter Pulu, who is a two-time Olympian champion with expertise in track racing and physical fitness.

Saipan Mayor Ramon Blas "RB" Camacho talked to the young participants about the importance of their health and lifestyle and encouraged them to become more involved in physical activities such as sports to not only benefit themselves but to set an example for their peers in the community.

"I believe in promoting a physically active and a healthy lifestyle for our youth. By investing, supporting, and empowering our youth, we contribute to their personal development, education, and overall well-being," said Camacho. "It is not only about providing the financial resources; it is about the impact that lies within activities such as the Youth Summer Sports Blitz Program. I will continue to support youth programs like this because it prevents obesity, diabetes, and other noncommunicable diseases."

Camacho thanks the 19th CNMI Youth Congress for creating and hosting the event and the coaches and volunteers for lending their expertise and skills to the program. He also lauded the other program sponsors—the Office of Youth Affairs, RUN Saipan, and Tupu Cane Juice—for lending their support to the event.

The program's main goal is to promote a healthy and active lifestyle among the local youth through sports. ***(PR)***

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UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 2nd Quarter General Membership Meeting on July 31, 2023, from 9:00am to 11:30am at Saipan World Resort – Sunflower Room

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Review & Adoption of the Agenda of July 31, 2023
IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2023

V. Action Item
  a. Review and Approve the Proposed FY 2024 CDD Work Plan
  b. Review and Approve the Proposed FY 2025 CDD Work Plan

VI. Reports
  a. Chairman
  b. State Plan Committee Chairperson
  c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson
  d. Executive Director

VII. Old Business
  a. CLI Update
  b. No Tech DIY Activity

VIII. New Business
  a. AS UCEDD Technical Assistance
  b. CNMI Walkability Action Institute
  c. CNMI Disability Sport Festival
  d. September 2023 – Emergency Preparedness Month

IX. Miscellaneous
X. Next Meeting
XI. Adjournment

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ Concepcion Ulloa
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total $274,744 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: DPW23-RFP No.: 42300084

SUBMISSION DATE: August 25, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Kagman Watershed Flood Protection and Irrigation Supply (KWP) Supplemental Watershed Plan-Environmental Document (SWP-ED)"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after July 24, 2023 at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred **Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on August 09, 2023, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Department of Land and Natural Resources Lower Base Office**, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on August 18, 2023 to **Mr. George C. Sablan, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ SYLVAN O. IGISOMAR
Secretary, DLNR

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Jorgensen nomination draws support, opposition

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Many people wrote letters of support while some appeared before the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee Wednesday afternoon to support the appointment of lawyer Bruce Lee Jorgensen to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Ports Authority board of directors representing Rota, but CPA director Pete P. Reyes strongly opposed the nomination, calling Jorgensen an opportunist and who is not even a resident of Rota and has a questionable character.

Antonio B. Cabrera, on the other hand, received no opposition to his nomination to the CPA board, representing Saipan, during the confirmation hearing.

The committee also held a confirmation hearing yesterday morning for former governor Juan N. Babauta and Mariah Barcinas, who were both appointed to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. board of trustees, representing Saipan and Rota, respectively.

The other confirmation hearing was for Michele O. Joab, who was nominated to serve as a member of the Civil Service Commission, representing Saipan and the Carolinian community.

Jorgensen gave no opening statement, but thanked the committee for considering his nomination. Cabrera said that, if he is confirmed, he is eager to work with the members of the CPA board, staff and management, and port users so that CPA ports can provide a safe and healthy environment for its employees, tenants, and the traveling public.

Jorgensen said he has been in the CNMI for over 14 months now and that he voted in the last election on Rota. Jorgensen said he first voted on Rota in 1986.

Jorgensen said he plans to retire on Rota. He said his son is going to try to build him a house there.

Jorgensen said the principal problem on Rota is commodity prices and that's a derivative problem that relates to both the seaport and airport operations. He said the airport facilities need to be improved.

He said he is currently using a post office box on Rota because he does not have a physical address there. "So therefore I have to take the assistance of a friend," he said, later admitting it is the P.O. box of Sen. Paul A. Manglona's wife and conceding that he should get himself a permanent P.O. box.

Reyes said Jorgensen is not a bona fide resident of Rota and that weeks, months, years, and possibly a decade has gone by where Jorgensen is nowhere to be seen in the CNMI.

Reyes said that Jorgensen's mailing address indicates a P.O. box number on Rota that is not even his. "This is very questionable as it appears that he is using another individual's home address in an attempt to establish his residency on Rota," he said.

Reyes noted that this is not the only instance where Jorgensen indicates a mailing address to be his own, where in reality it belongs to other people. He said court records show that Jorgensen "filed an admittedly defunct address with the court and routinely used home addresses of other people he may or may not be associated with."

In fact, Reyes said, Jorgensen had to be compelled by a federal court judge and his co-counsels in a case to associate with local counsel as mandated by local rules 3.

Reyes said that Jorgensen's nomination violates the statement made at a transition committee briefing that committee members would not be appointed to the agency they were evaluating as that would represent a conflict of interest. Jorgensen served on the transition committee that reviewed CPA.

"The final report that was turned in shamelessly included a recommendation for one of the transition team members to be appointed to the CPA board," Reyes said. He said he made a comment to this effect, "yet lo and behold, Jorgensen was nominated."

Reyes also highlighted Jorgensen's billing as a lawyer in Betty Johnson's lawsuit against the CNMI government surrounding the Retirement Fund. Jorgensen reportedly sought payment for $18.6 million up to $38.9 million in legal fees.

"He is an opportunist. When the right time comes, he seems to take advantage of us because we are supposed to not know any better," Reyes said.

Speaking as a CNMI resident, Marianas Visitors Authority acting board chair Gloria Cavanagh spoke in support of Jorgensen's nomination. "I've always said that one cannot choose where you're born. But one can always choose where you call home later in life," Cavanagh said.

Cavanagh said she believes that Jorgensen will fight for the people of Rota and the CNMI and that his main goal is to bring commodities to Rota at a reasonable price.

EAGI chair Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said she received letters of support, including from Jorgensen's son, which was read by former Rota teacher Ron Hodges at the hearing. Babauta said other letters of support were from Public Lands Secretary Teresita A. Santos, Eusebio Manglona, attorney William J. Plumb from Hawaii, Ross Manglona, and Nick C. Sablan.

Babauta said the committee also received letters of support for Cabrera from Jesus V. Deleon Guerrero, former CPA executive director Carlos Shoda, and fire chief of Andersen Air Force Base Stanley Torres, and Juan S. Reyes.

Reps. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) and Manny Gregory T. Castro (Ind-Saipan), and Felipe Atalig were among those who testified in support of Jorgensen's nomination.

Babauta said Sen. Dennis Mendiola (R-Rota) submitted a letter dated July 21, 2023 and attached to it is a petition from some residents of Rota, asking the committee to reconsider and withhold Jorgensen's confirmation.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO: CPA-RFP-011-23-REPACKAGED
SUBMISSION DATE: JULY 28, 2023 TIME: 2:00 P.M.

SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INTERIOR PLANTS RENTAL, SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE

THE PROPOSAL PACKAGE MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA), 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, SAIPAN, MP 96950, DURING WORKING WORKS BEGINNING JUNE 28, 2023.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT MUST BE IN WRITING AND ADDRESS TO THE PROCUREMENT OFFICER, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY EITHER BY FACSIMILE AT 234-5962 OR EMAIL: atudela@cnmiports.com NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., JULY 20, 2023.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A PROPOSAL IF IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CPA. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CPA.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: _____

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-088

Opening Date: Friday, July 21, 2023
Closing Date: Thursday, August 3, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	**Engineering Technician**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Division-Transmission & Distribution**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$20,826.00 to $28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Division Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Provides technical support and assistance related to project management, safety, quality control and assurance.
- Performs field investigations and inspections.
- Performs field or easement verifications.
- Ensures adherence with plans, specifications and contractual compliance. Submits deficiencies for review and correction.
- Gathers data through observation and by reviewing relevant resources such as construction plans, blue prints, specifications, maps, technical drawings, property records, and/or GPS data.
- Enters, updates and verifies data in systems.
- Prepares and maintains reports, notices, drawings, graphs, charts, correspondence, cost estimates and related engineering documents in accordance with standards.
- Plans and prioritizes schedules and routes for field inspections.
- Researches existing project sites and explores potential construction sites. Monitors rights of way and easements.
- Monitors and reviews equipment and supplies inventory. Provides notification of resources or maintenance needs.
- Provides support and assistance with special engineering studies.
- May be required to be on call outside of normal working hours.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education & Experience: High School Diploma, GED, or ABE Program AS and two (2) years of journey level experience in drafting, office and field engineering, or surveying support work.
Proficiency in the applications of Microsoft software – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth State and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Basic engineering and construction terminology, methods, practices, and techniques; Surveying methods and techniques; Mathematical concepts; Applicable equipment, controls and systems of assigned area of responsibility; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, rules, regulations and standards; Reading and interpreting plans, specifications, maps and related technical documentation; Performing engineering surveys, mapping and locating; Performing inspections and identifying issues in assigned area of responsibility; Operating and maintaining equipment in assigned area of responsibility; Performing mathematical calculations and estimating resources and costs; Researching, troubleshooting and problem solving; Preparing technical reports, maps and related documents used in assigned area of responsibility; Applying safe work practices; Planning and prioritizing activities and routes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing:**
  - o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday to Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-084 (RE-ANNOUNCEMENT)

Opening Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2023
Closing Date: Monday, August 7, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	**Fiscal Assistant**
DEPARTMENT:	**Tinian Administration**
LOCATION:	**Tinian, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 to $22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Resident Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department.

Duties:

- Updates and verifies customer account or work order information; enters and balances payment data; prepares timekeeping records; may work in the field obtaining and entering customer utility meter information, and replacing or disconnecting utility meters and services.
- Receives customer payments; balances and records cash and other payment receipts; verifies receipts against payment system data; and prepares deposits.
- Monitors and updates customer account information; researches account discrepancies or unusual meter readings; calculates payment information for past-due accounts, new installations and security deposits; reports research findings; and/or follows up on service or work order status.
- Greets customers or receives calls; responds to customer inquiries such as account balance information, payment due dates, minimum payment amounts due or general information inquiries; refers customers to appropriate resources.
- Copies and scans documents; maintains and organizes files records, reports and accounting transaction documentation.
- Updates and maintains spreadsheet reports; prepares fiscal transaction reports or other work activity reports.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or General Education Diploma or Adult Basic Education Program.

Knowledge of: Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology.

Skills in: Receiving, posting and reconciling payments, cash receipts or account information; Verifying and updating account or utility meter information; Providing customer service and responding to inquiries; Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching account information or discrepancies; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

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$2M in coral restoration grants awarded to US Pacific Islands

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation awarded seven grants totaling more than $2 million to support coral restoration in the four U.S. Pacific Island jurisdictions of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Hawai'i. The grants are funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The grants will support projects that directly contribute to coral restoration progression in the U.S. Pacific Islands by providing the means for capacity building and/or restoration implementation. The four U.S. Pacific Island jurisdictions started a coral restoration planning process in 2020 that led to the development of a draft action plan for each jurisdiction for one priority restoration goal. Now, additional investment and capacity is needed to meet the U.S. Pacific Islands coral restoration goals and implement the draft restoration action plans.

The projects will take place through the summer of 2025.

In the CNMI, the Johnston Applied Marine Science was awarded a grant for a project that, through thermal stress testing and the development of novel coral settlement substrates, will provide scientific support to improve the climate resilience and scale of restored coral populations in the CNMI. It also directly supports restoration implementation in the CNMI through the expansion and stocking of existing ocean and land-based coral nurseries, allowing restoration efforts to be scaled-up.

The CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality's Division of Coastal Resources Management is also awarded a grant to address threats to the CNMI's coral reefs and ensure survival of critical reef habitats in the face of climate change and varying ocean conditions. This project aims to increase coastal and coral reef resilience and restore critical coral reef habitat. Activities will include monitoring and updating the CNMI Coral Restoration Draft Action Plan, securing permits, in-situ coral gardening, and monitoring post outplant reef metrics.

All jurisdictions—the CNMI, Guam, Hawai'i, American Samoa—will also be awarded grants to initiate the early steps toward an implementation network in the U.S. Pacific for coral reproduction and seeding, based on SECORE's successful model for capacity-building in the Caribbean. In collaboration with the University of Guam, SECORE will provide both virtual and hands-on training workshops and site-specific scoping plans for implementation of larval restoration in each jurisdiction.

In Guam, the University of Guam Marine Laboratory is awarded a grant to work on a project to extend ongoing coral restoration initiated in Guam in 2017. Work has focused on conservation of eight species of staghorn (Acropora) coral, via ocean nursery rearing and re-introduction to healthy habitats.

The Guam Coral Reef Initiative will implement the Guam Coral Reef Restoration Action Plan through the construction of a new pilot coral nursery and the expansion of an existing nursery in collaboration with the Raymundo Coral Lab. The nurseries will propagate outplanting material for high-priority restoration sites identified in the draft coral restoration action plan. The nurseries will be populated with fast-growing species known to exist currently or historically at the identified sites. ***(PR)***

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 14, 2023 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB23-CHCC/CGC-988 CRISIS-017

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 14, 2023 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLE"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

MARK A. SCOGGINS
SCOGGINS LAW OFFICE, LLC
2nd Floor, MIC Building, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero
San Jose Village
P.O. Box 501127
Saipan, MP 96950-1127
Telephone Nos.: (670) 234-7455 / 7427
Facsimile No.: (670) 234-7256

Attorney for Petitioners.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Adoption of	] FCD Adoption Action No. 23-0281
JOSE W. TERLAJE, JR. and JAMES NAOKI W. TERLAJE male minor children.	] **NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR ADOPTION**] Date: August 21, 2023] Time: 1:30 p.m.
By: JAMES OIKANG WALLY and BARBARA TECHUR	] Judge: Honorable] Teresa Kim-Tenorio
Petitioners.	]

Notice is hereby given that a verified petition was filed in the above-entitled court for the petition for adoption of Jose W. Terlaje and James Naoki W. Terlaje, by the petitioners. The original petition is available for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court at Susupe, Saipan.

A hearing of the above-entitled matter will be held on August 21, 2023 at 1:30 p.m., at the Guma Hustisia, Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SO NOTICED this 25th day of July, 2023.

/S/_____
CLERK OF COURT
CNMI Superior Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Adoption of:	
L.X., Minor Child.	**FCD AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 22-0332**
By: **QINGSHAN ZHENG,** Petitioner.	**NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on **September 25, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.**, in Courtroom **217A** before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 17th day of July, 2023.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

MARIANAS HISTORY CONFERENCE

Registration now open

Registration is now open for the 6th Marianas History Conference, which will be held on Septe. 1 - 3, 2023, on Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

To register, visit the following link: https://bit.ly/mhc2023registration

This year's theme is "Healing the Wounds of History." As the world continues to heal from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded of the value of healing in the Marianas archipelago and the lessons from history that continue to guide us during this pivotal time.

Aiming to further contribute to and engage in a constructive process of understanding and healing, the 6th Marianas History Conference will center presentations and discussion around the theme of Healing the Wounds of History. Historic research, analysis, and interpretations will be presented in an all-inclusive conference and serve as a collective effort toward the integration of shared histories and memories across the archipelago.

For more information on registration, contact University of Guam Global Learning & Engagement at (671) 735-2600. ***(PR)***

Applications now open for ship repair apprenticeship boot camp

Guam Community College is accepting applications for the upcoming Cabras Marine Corporation Ship Repair Apprenticeship Boot Camp. This boot camp begins on Monday, Aug. 7, 2023, and is free-of-charge for all qualified applicants. The last day to register is Friday. Aug. 4, 2023. Boot camp graduates will be hired by Cabras Marine Corp. as apprentices.

Boot camp participants will take carpentry, introduction to painting, and introduction to diesel technology and preventative maintenance courses, as well as certifications in WorkKeys, Work Ethic and OSHA.

Those interested are encouraged to logon to GuamCC.edu/CEWD and fill out the online interest form. The boot camp is limited to 40 participants. Those interested will have to meet the following requirements:

- Must be underemployed or unemployed. Underemployed applicants must be able to attend the full boot camp.
- Must have at least high school diploma or equivalent.
- Must be 18+ years of age.
- Must be able to work in the United States
- Must submit police and court clearances and obtain Defense Biometric Identification System, or DBIDS, card.

For more information on this boot camp, contact GCC's Continuing Education and Workforce Development department at 671-735-5640 extension 5411, or email workforce@guamcc.edu. The CEWD office is located on campus in Building 2000, you may visit Monday through Friday between 8am and 5pm. ***(PR)***

ROBERT T. TORRES (F0197)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758 CK, Saipan MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-7859
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Defendant Lan Lan Wang

CHARITY HODSON (F0487)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607, Saipan MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749

Co-Counsel for Defendant Lan Lan Wang

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WON BAE SHON, Plaintiff, vs. HEE JONG CHOO, SOO WOAN JUN, YAN HUA LI, JING ZHU SUN, LAN LAN WANG, and DOES One to Five, Defendants.	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 15-0018** **SUMMONS**

TO CROSSCLAIM DEFENDANT SOO WOAN JUN:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to DEFENDANT LAN LAN WANG'S COUNTERCLAIM AGAINST WON BAE SHON AND CROSSCLAIM AGAINST SOO WOAN JUN ("the Complaint"), a copy of which is given to you herewith, within Twenty-One (21) Days after service of this Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to **Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, 5960 Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. Box 500730**, Saipan, or soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susupe Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your Attorney and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated this 14th day of March, 2023.

/s/
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 | Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
Tel. No. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of July 28, 2023

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Department of Public Works (DPW)	5/18/2023 SW-2023-017 (Formerly SW-2019-X-049)	Japanese Road Improvement	As Terlaje, Saipan	Wetlands & Mangroves	Approved 07/27/2023
2. Seahorse, Inc. Saipan dba Seahorse Tour	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-035	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing (Towed Flotation) & Water Jet Craft Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	MSO Permit Approved – Pending Beach Concession Permit
3. Taotao Marianas, Inc.	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-036	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing (Towed Flotation), & Water Jet Craft Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	MSO Permit Approved – Pending Beach Concession Permit
4. Big Boy Marine Sports, Inc dba Big Boyz II Marine	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-045	Commercial Water Jet Craft & Jetboard Operations, Helmet Diving & Kayaking Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	MSO Permit Approved – Pending Beach Concession Permit
5. Akhil Chandra Mollick dba Ichiban Marine Sports	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-066 (Formerly SLR-2021-049-R3)	Commercial Water Jet Craft & Parasailing Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Activities Under Review*
6. Aquatic Marine Co., Inc. dba Aquatic Marine Sports	5/31/2023 SLR-2023-048	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing (Towed Floatation), Water Jet Craft Operations & Snorkeling Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	STOP CLOCK* 6/20/2023
7. Island Marine Sports, Inc.	6/7/2023 SLR-2023-055	Commercial Parasailing Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Certified Complete 07/26/2023
8. Aquaville, Inc. dba Sea Walker Tours	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-059	Commercial Hydrobob & SCUBA Diving Operation - UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 07/26/2023
9. Aquaville, Inc. dba Sea Walker Tours	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-060	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing Operations (Towed Flotation) & Seawalker Operation-UBA Activities	Waters Fronting Kanoa/ World Resorts to Managaha Island, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 07/26/2023
10. Auto Marine, Inc.	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-061	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing Operations (Towed Flotation), Seawalker Operation - UBA Activities & Snorkeling Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 07/26/2023
11. Triple J Saipan, Inc.	6/15/2023 TMS-2022-035-A1	Construction of Two Barracks Unit & One Recreational Building	San Jose, Tinian	Major Siting	Certified Complete 07/13/2023 Public Hearing 08/08/2023
12. Department of Community & Cultural Affairs – Commonwealth of Community & Cultural Affairs (DCCA-CCAC)	07/18/2023 SSm-2023-077	42nd Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival	Susupe, Saipan	Shoreline	Approved* 07/24/2023
13. Saipan Crewboats, Inc.	07/19/2023 SPIm-2023-078	Drydock C/B Shamrock	Lowerbase,	Ports & Industrial Saipan	Approved* 07/26/2023
14. U.S.A. Fanter Corporation, Ltd.	07/21/2023 SPI-2023-079	Staging & Stockpiling	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Certified Complete* 07/21/223
15. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC)	07/21/2023 SSm-2023-080	Tanapag Sewer Mains & Manhole Replacement & Rehabilitation	Tanapag, Saipan	Shoreline	Under Review*
16. Mariana Global Inc.	07/25/2023 SSLRm-2023-081	Transfer of Interest (Managaha Concession)	Managaha Island	Shoreline, Lagoon & Reef	Certified Complete* 07/25/2023
17. Time Creation Corporation	07/25/2023 SPIm-2023-082	Drydock M/V Discovery	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Certified Complete* 07/26/202 Approved* 07/27/2023
18. Kyung Lee	07/26/2023 SS-2023-083	Construction of a Pala-Pala	Laolao, Saipan	Shoreline	Under Review*
19. Mariana Global Inc.	07/26/2023 SSLRm-2023-084	Renovation of Managaha Concession Facility	Managaha Island	Shoreline, Lagoon & Reef	Under Review*

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

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EDITORIAL

The Biden debt—nothing to see here

It was only a little more than a year ago that President Joe Biden—desperately seeking to divert attention from rampant inflation—was bragging incessantly about his administration's deficit-cutting skills.

"My first budget that passed and became law, it cut the federal deficit by $350 billion," Biden said in April 2022. "We cut the deficit $350 billion. And the budget I proposed this year, if it comes to total fruition, it will cut the deficit by 1 trillion, 300 billion dollars. So when my Republican friends start talking about 'big spenders' and the reason why there's inflation, take a look. Take a look. We've cut the deficit drastically. … This year, we're on track for $1.3 trillion in cuts. And look, that would be the largest debt reduction in American history."

Of course, the idea of Biden the deficit slayer was pure poppycock. Had the president done absolutely nothing, according to factcheck.org, the deficit would have fallen significantly because of billions in pandemic spending coming off the books. But thanks to the spending binge included in the American Rescue Plan, the red ink flowed virtually unabated under Mr. Biden. "Instead of an $874 billion drop in deficits between 2020 and 2021, the deficit was then projected to drop just $126 billion," the website noted.

Moreover, last year's spin is all but forgotten today. Mr. Biden 12 months later instead touts easing inflation, while saying virtually nothing about the debt and deficit—and for good reason.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the deficit for fiscal 2023 will hit $1.5 trillion, up from $1.38 trillion in 2022. In addition, the CBO projects that trillion-dollar deficits will be the norm thanks to the current president, before exceeding $2 trillion in fiscal 2030 through 2033.

As GOP congressional adviser David Winston wrote for The Hill in April, Mr. Biden's spending spree is unprecedented. Instead of presiding over a budget that wound down once-in-a-lifetime COVID spending, the president has kept outlays far in excess of pre-pandemic levels. The federal government spent $4.4 trillion in fiscal 2019, yet is poised to distribute $5.8 trillion in fiscal 2023, a whopping 32 percent increase. By working much of the new red ink into baseline budgets, Mr. Biden has set the stage for annual spending to top $10 trillion.

And as Mr. Winston points out, none of this has anything to do with a lack of tax revenue. "In dealing with the debt and deficit," he notes, "President Biden has had the advantage of a 43 percent increase in federal tax receipts from 2020 to 2022." Income tax collections jumped 64 percent over that time, and the corporate income tax take was at a record level.

So where is Mr. Biden, the deficit superhero? Still looking for his cape, obviously. The administration's fiscal 2024 budget would put the country on the road to surpassing $50 trillion in debt in just a decade. Even the administration's own optimistic numbers predict average deficits of $1.7 trillion over the next 10 years, according to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, a fiscal watchdog.

It was barely two years ago that Mr. Biden uttered his famously wrong insight that "there's nobody suggesting there's unchecked inflation on the way—no serious economist." It's fair to conclude that, whether he's discussing inflation or the deficit, the president doesn't know what he's talking about.

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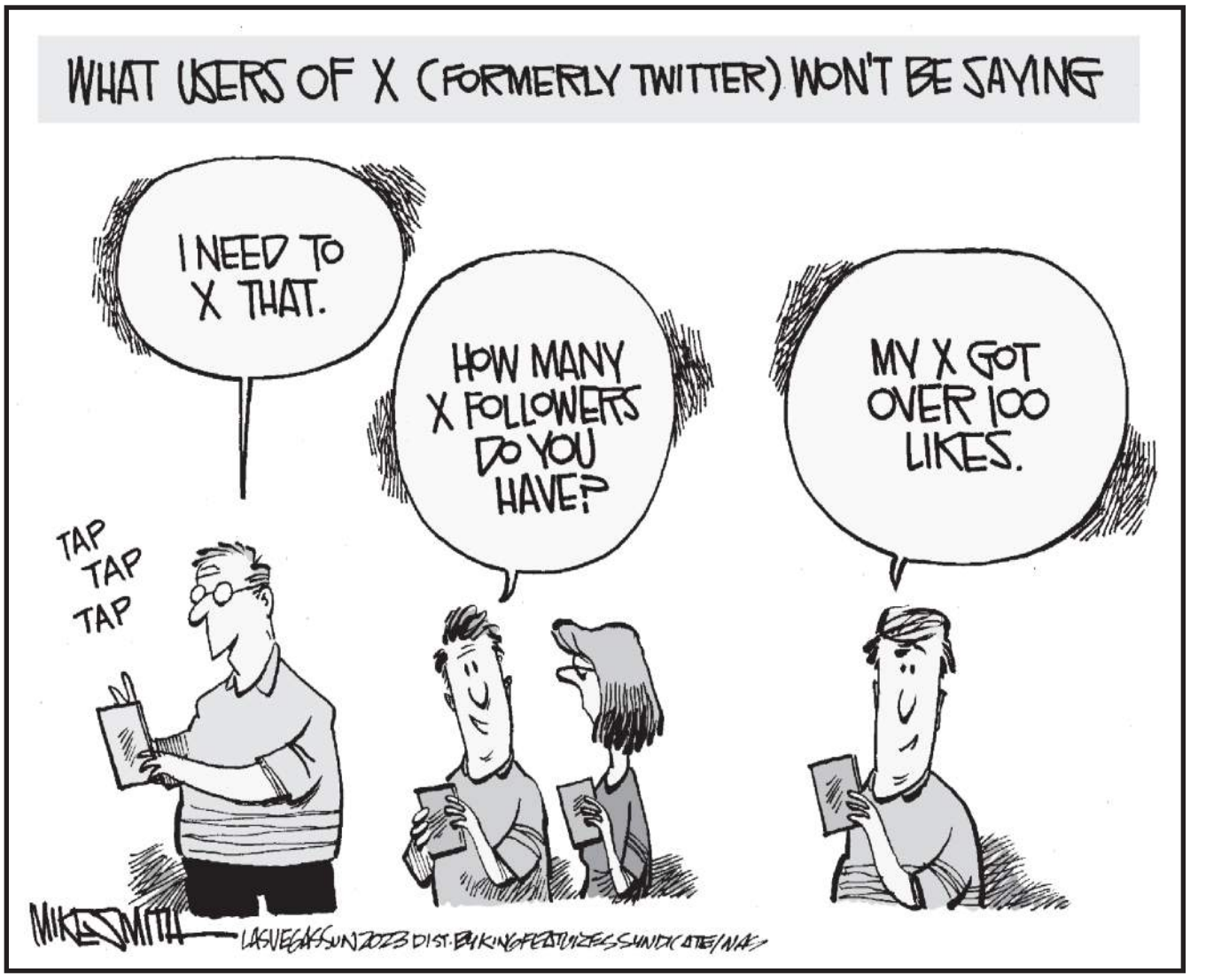
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Inflation: Who's really at fault?

By PETER ST. ONGE
The Heritage Foundation

Peter St. Onge, Ph.D. (peter.stonge@heritage.org), is the Mark A. Kolokotrones Fellow in Economic Freedom at The Heritage Foundation.

Did greedy grocers and grabby workers cause the inflation?

That's what the central bankers of the world would have us believe. Apparently losing confidence that they can fix the inflation they created, they're turning to Plan B: blame the people, so we fight each other.

As the European Central Bank succinctly put it on Twitter: "What really drives inflation? Profits or wages?"

Get it, voter? Is it the greedy right-wing capitalists or the greedy left-wing socialists?

Central bankers actually have a name for this scapegoating: "greedflation." As in, double-digit inflation had nothing to do with central bankers printing up $7 trillion and handing it to governments, bankers and to the rich in asset purchases. Rather, it all happened because people like you and me suddenly got greedy.

In fact, something sudden did happen: By early 2022 one of every three dollars in existence had been printed in just two years. For centuries, economists have known that reckless money printing causes inflation. And that inflation then causes higher prices, higher paper profits and higher paper wages.

Since the beginning of our current inflation, corporate profits have taken the brunt of this scapegoating. By mid-2022, annual pre-tax corporate profits were up roughly 50% -- $1.1 trillion -- compared to pre-pandemic. Socialist politicians like Elizabeth Warren seized on this to accuse companies of causing inflation, bizarrely singling out grocery stores, one of the lowest margin businesses in the world.

Workers got a free pass, partly because real wages have fallen dramatically since Biden took office, summing to a cumulative 10% drop. But now that workers are finally getting pay raises as the money printing trickles down to them, they are joining the naughty list as "wageflation" becomes the scapegoat du jour.

We can understand why central bankers want to blame companies or workers, but let's play along and ask: Do profits and wages cause inflation?

In short, no: It's the opposite. Inflation causes phantom profits for three reasons: too much money chasing too few goods; how accounting rules handle inflation; and economic uncertainty cutting investment. And when the money printing trickles down to workers, they catch up, as they are glacially doing now.

Starting with the money printing, during the pandemic the Fed printed roughly $7 trillion in new money to finance deficits to buy lockdowns. This occurred even as those same lockdowns were reducing the amount of stuff for sale; supply chains were choked, and services were literally closed.

Too much money chasing too few goods means more dollars per remaining good. In the kingdom of too much money and not enough production, the one-eyed factory is king.

Next up is accounting. Inventory is by definition bought in the past -- meaning it cost the old pre-inflation price. Say your haberdashery buys hats for $9 and sells them for $10 -- you make a buck. If all prices go up 10%, last year's $9 hats go for $11 – your profits doubled. But you're no healthier as a business: Every hat sold has to be restocked at $10 now – you still only make a buck. But you get a one-time profit on old, cheap inventory. It's an accounting quirk, not some nefarious shift of the economy toward Big Sneaker.

The final part is uncertainty. If a recession is on the horizon -- or, say, a lockdown of half the economy -- businesses pause investing because they're trying to survive. They don't replace machines or invest in advertising.

This cuts their costs in the moment -- which raises paper profits. But, of course, it sacrifices future growth.

In fact, early on in the COVID pandemic, investment plunged by 22%. While investment did rise in 2021 as the economy first stepped out of lockdowns, recently it's been crawling along at just over 1%, boosting paper profits even as the one-time accounting and supply chain effects fade.

So put it together and rising corporate profits these past three years have been a result, not a cause, of money printing paired with economic uncertainty. Both made in Washington, and both ongoing. While wages are only now beginning to catch up to prices.

Governments love to scapegoat the people for their screw-ups. Because getting half the country to blame the other half lets them off scot-free so they can get back to fleecing and impoverishing us while we fight.

It's enough to make you wonder if maybe Americans aren't actually at each other's throats. That perhaps both sides agree that the system is broken, but that our elite does everything possible to set us against one another.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

65 years of NASA—an astrophysicist reflects on the agency's legacy

By STEPHEN G. ALEXANDER
Miami University

THE CONVERSATION—Sixty-five years ago, in 1958, several government programs that had been pursuing spaceflight combined to form NASA. At the time, I was only 3 years old.

I've now been a professor of physics and astronomy for nearly 30 years, and I realize that, like countless others who came of age in the 1960s and '70s, NASA's missions have had a profound effect on my life and career path. From John Glenn's first flight into orbit to the Hubble telescope, the agency's legacy has inspired generations of scientists.

First flight into orbit

The date was Feb. 20, 1962. My first grade teacher, Ms. Ochs, told the class that we would be doing something different on that day. She went to the blackboard and wrote in large block letters "John Glenn" and "NASA."

She asked if any of us knew what those words meant. None of us did, so she grabbed a globe, and using a pen with a plastic cap, she demonstrated that John Glenn, an astronaut, would soon be launched on a rocket—the pen—from Florida. When the rocket got high enough, Glenn in the Mercury capsule—the cap—would separate from the rocket and go into orbit around the Earth. She demonstrated this by moving the pen cap around the globe.

My class then sat and listened to the historic launch of Friendship 7 carrying Glenn, which was the first U.S. mission to send a man into orbit around the Earth.

There would be three more missions in the one-manned Mercury program, culminating in Gordon Cooper's Faith 7 mission, which completed 22 Earth orbits. The program proved that NASA could put a manned spacecraft in orbit and bring it back safely to Earth. Next, NASA was ready to move on to a more maneuverable two-person spacecraft.

A two-person spacecraft

In 1965, NASA planned to launch the two-person Gemini spacecraft, and I moved on to the fifth grade where my teacher, Mrs. Wein, was also a space enthusiast. In December, NASA launched the joint missions of Gemini 6 and 7, and Mrs. Wein gave me permission to stay home from school to watch the TV coverage.

This was the first time that two piloted spacecraft performed what is called a rendezvous maneuver, where they meet up in orbit. Orbital maneuvers like this require very precise calculations and a spacecraft in which astronauts can make path changes in orbit—which is what the Gemini capsule was designed to do.

The Gemini 6A and 7 spacecrafts practiced a rendezvous maneuver in Earth's orbit. At the time, I didn't understand the importance of this mission, until Mrs. Wein directed me to the "S" volume of the World Book Encyclopedia. There, under "Spaceflight," was a full-page diagram of the lunar orbit rendezvous plan that a NASA engineer, John Houbolt, had developed to get the astronauts to the Moon and back.

The central feature of the lunar orbit rendezvous was that two spacecraft, the Apollo Command Module and the Lunar Excursion Module, would rendezvous in orbit around the Moon using the same technique the Gemini 6 and 7 missions had demonstrated. The technology of this maneuver, used in Apollo missions, would later help land Neil Armstrong on the Moon.

On to the Moon

In December 1968, when I was in eighth grade, I watched the Apollo 8 mission orbit the Earth on TV. It was the first time that anyone, whether U.S. astronaut or Soviet cosmonaut, had left low Earth orbit. This mission gave us "Earthrise", the first look at our home planet as seen from afar.

The Apollo 11 Moon landing happened in July 1969. I will never forget sitting in my living room as Armstrong stepped off the Lunar Excursion Module onto the lunar surface. With Armstrong's steps, the aspirations of a lost president, thousands of NASA scientists and engineers and millions of public followers were fulfilled.

In December 1972, when I was a senior in high school, Gene Cernan became the last person to walk on the Moon during the Apollo 17 mission. Like many of us who witnessed the Apollo missions, I listened to Cernan's final words from the Moon, where he challenged young people to continue what NASA had begun.

Inspired by Cernan's words, I went on to earn degrees in aerospace engineering and worked on both the reentry of the Skylab Space Station and the early mission planning for the Magellan spacecraft that visited Venus.

At this point, I made a career change—I returned to school to study physics and ultimately ended up in theoretical astrophysics.

After Apollo

NASA has had a profound influence in the sciences. For one, the ability to guide unmanned robotic spacecraft anywhere in the solar system was a byproduct of the technologies necessary for the manned Apollo missions. Using this technology, NASA has sent probes to all of the planets—and some non-planets—in the solar system, revolutionizing scientists' knowledge of our cosmic backyard.

Perhaps the most ambitious of these is the Mars Perseverance Rover, which looks for chemical evidence of past or present life on Mars. It also collects and leaves samples for a potential return mission sometime in the 2030s.

In terms of pure astronomy, NASA's space-based observatories span the electromagnetic spectrum. The Hubble Space Telescope and its newly launched cousin, the James Webb Space Telescope, have allowed astronomers to get large telescopes above Earth's optically hazy atmosphere. With these instruments, we can see almost to the beginning of time, since looking deeper into space also means looking back in time.

The James Webb Space Telescope is revolutionizing our view of the cosmos—there has not been an equal revolution in observational astronomy since Galileo first pointed a telescope at the heavens in 1609.

Looking ahead

What will the future hold for NASA? It's hard to say.

Recently, private enterprise has driven advances in both launch vehicles and satellite design, although NASA will likely continue to have a leading role, not only in the spaceflight but the scientific research as well.

I hope that today there are elementary teachers like Ms. Ochs and Mrs. Wein who will nurture the wonder and excitement of spaceflight in their students. But they won't have to just listen on the radio. They can watch livestreams, like those of launches of SpaceX's Falcon Heavy in 2018 and NASA's Artemis I in November 2022.

NASA's first 65 years have been an amazing record of accomplishments. When the students I teach today near my age, I wonder what amazing things—about which we can only dream—they will look back on.

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Medicaid expansion hurts the mental health of the needy

By MARKUS BJOERKHEIM, AND LIAM SIGAUD
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

The signs of America's mental health crisis are everywhere. In response, policymakers have continued to focus on a popular strategy: expanding health coverage through safety net programs, especially Medicaid. Increasing the number of insured Americans, we are told, will ensure access to care, yet it is becoming increasingly clear that record Medicaid enrollment has not prevented the brunt of the mental health crisis from falling on society's most vulnerable. In fact, our new research indicates this is not coincidence and that instead, spreading coverage out among more people may be part of the problem.

Other recent studies bear out the ways in which vulnerable populations are struggling to receive mental health treatment. Among children of low-income parents—a group Medicaid was originally created to help and for whom research finds the most positive impacts—only half of emergency room visits for mental health crises get adequate follow-up care, and nearly two-thirds of victims of traumatic firearm injuries don't receive timely mental health support.

And the problems are not limited to children. In new research conducted with our Mercatus Center colleague Kofi Ampaabeng, we find that the 2014 expansion of Medicaid to tens of millions of adults—the key pillar of "Obamacare"—worsened the mental health among existing Medicaid beneficiaries between the ages of 40 and 64, causing a marked 10.9 percent increase in symptoms of depression.

It's hard to know the causal effect of a policy, let alone which mechanism is driving the effect. But all signs point toward the obvious: The surge in the use of health care services—especially mental health treatment—by newly enrolled beneficiaries left fewer providers available to care for those already relying on Medicaid.

We find larger effects among women and disabled beneficiaries, people who are statistically more likely to need mental health services. We also find more pronounced effects among rural residents and for people living in newly designated mental health shortage areas—all consistent with the notion that Medicaid expansions placed strain on already stretched health systems and crowded out care for the most needy.

To be sure, trouble accessing care is nothing new to people on Medicaid, who face long wait times for appointments and prescription drugs, and routinely have difficulty receiving specialist services, especially for mental health or psychiatric care. Our work suggests coverage expansions exacerbate these long-standing challenges.

The law's backers promised that expanding Medicaid would deliver far-reaching benefits but paid insufficient attention to the distributional effects. There's no doubt that the expansion improved mental health among new enrollees and drove down suicide rates, partly through reduced financial distress and partly by connecting drug users to substance abuse treatment.

While we should not ignore mental health progress among new enrollees, policymakers need to pay closer attention to the unintended consequences of expanding public insurance programs. The majority of research related to Medicaid expansion has focused on those receiving coverage from the reforms, but spillover effects are arguably even more important, given that the original Medicaid population outnumbers the expansion group by about three to one. On net, even small negative spillover effects could completely offset the benefits to the newly covered.

As policymakers search for ways to address America's mental health crisis, increasing the availability of mental health care, not merely insurance coverage, should be at the forefront of their agendas. A good place to start would be by reforming scope-of-practice laws, relaxing occupational licensing restrictions, and expanding telehealth. Most importantly, the quest for universal coverage, commendable as it may be, must not come at the expense of the most vulnerable in society.

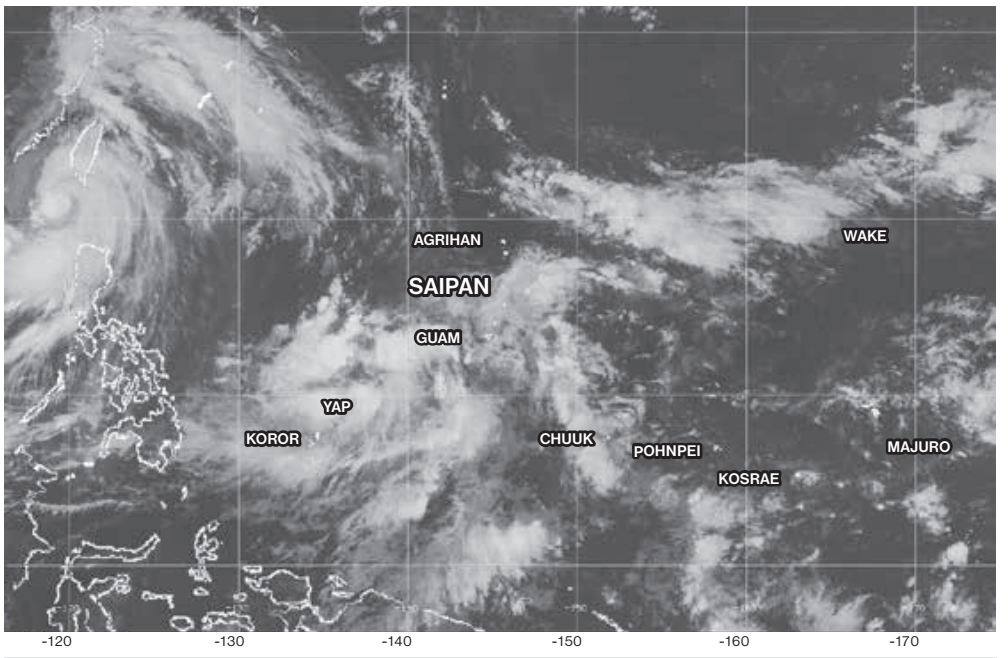
Markus Bjoerkheim is a postdoctoral fellow and Liam Sigaud is a postgraduate fellow with the Mercatus Center at George Mason University's Open Health Project. They are coauthors of a new study, The Effect of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid Expansion on the Mental Health of Already-Enrolled Medicaid Beneficiaries with Kofi Ampaabeng.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Some of the storms could produce heavy rainfall. Partly sunny	A 40 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
84° 78°	84° 78°	84° 79°	86° 79°	85° 80°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:15 AM, THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Cloudy skies, with widespread showers for Guam and Rota. Mostly cloudy for Tinian and Saipan with scattered showers. Ipan buoy shows 7 to 8 feet combined seas. KBDI is 275 and remains in the low category.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorms/Wind	83° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Saturday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Sunday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Monday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM
Tuesday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	12:59 AM	2:20 PM
Saturday	-	1:49 AM	3:22 PM
Sunday	-	2:45 AM	4:27 PM
Monday	-	3:49 AM	5:32 PM
Tuesday	-	4:57 AM	6:33 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Sunny	55° / 40°
Beijing	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 74°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	93° / 84°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	89° / 77°
London	Partly Cloudy	91° / 70°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	91° / 72°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	61° / 52°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	89° / 80°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	83° / 68°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°
Paris	Sunny	95° / 73°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°
Rome	Sunny	97° / 73°
Salem	Thunderstorms	84° / 65°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	69° / 54°
Seoul	Rain	82° / 75°
Tokyo	Showers	88° / 75°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	83° / 66°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:04 AM	High Tide	1.95
9:46 AM	Low Tide	0.23
5:14 PM	High Tide	1.72
9:36 PM	Low Tide	1.44

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 19, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7 from July 21

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7 from July 20

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

4 Years

NORTHERN MARIANAS INSURANCE ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1983 ®

OF TRUST AND SECURITY

AIUP
ASSOCIATED INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS OF THE PACIFIC, INC.

CALVO'S 85 YEARS insurance
Protecting Micronesia for 85 Years

CIC
Century Insurance Co., Ltd.
A TanHoldings Company

EICI
EQUITABLE INSURANCE CO., INC.

MOYLAN'S
MOYLAN'S INSURANCE
HOME OF THE GOOD GUYS & GALS

pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc.
Rest Assured.

PACIFIC BASIN INSURANCE, CO.

TAKAGI & ASSOCIATES, INC
T&A

VIZION INSURANCE

Celebrating a 40-Year Milestone

Congratulations to the Northern Marianas Insurance Association as it commemorates 40 years of service to the Commonwealth! We thank the association's continued efforts to improve and enhance the insurance industry for the betterment of our people.

The insurance industry has long played a considerable role in our economy, and the NMIA's achievement of this milestone is no easy feat. We look forward to partnering with members of the association and other private sector organizations in growing our economy and in advancing the benefits that the insurance industry provides to our people and to our businesses.

Again, congratulations!

Arnold I. Palacios
Governor

David M. Apatang
Lt Governor

NORTHERN MARIANAS INSURANCE ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1983

40 Years
OF TRUST AND SECURITY

Wishing a very happy 40th anniversary to the Northern Marianas Insurance Association. Your dedication and success are truly commendable!

FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF

EICI EQUITABLE INSURANCE CO., INC.

P.O Box 500686 Saipan, MP 96950
Email: equitable.insurance@gmail.com
Telephone: 235-5452 and 235-0488 | Fax: 235-5451

Northern Marianas Insurance Association

A Message from the President: Happy 40th Anniversary!

As we enter the second half of the year 2023, the Northern Marianas Insurance Association is able look back on the last two decades that encompassed several achievements whilst also celebrating its 40th anniversary. Our membership has increased by 20% in this year alone, which is a welcome development in celebrating our 40th anniversary this year. The association of property and casualty insurance companies has not witnessed such interest in our organization during the last decade until now. It only shows that the stakes that we are in now is too high for the insurance industry to be silent and not to get involved in this evolving nature of our business. The increase in technology, the calamities and disasters that affect our Mariana Islands which include both Guam and Saipan, and the economic downturn brought about by the dwindling numbers of tourist entering our region left us with no option but to thrive and let our vision continues to be our focus in the years to come.

We believe that insurance still plays one of the major stimulators of every economy in the world, particularly after major losses as in a catastrophe. Two decades ago in 2001, we had the terrorism attack in the U.S. that shook the world. Terrorism insurance was born. Today, we are looking at cyber risk insurance as a new insurance product line because of the influx of social media and company dependence on online communications. We experienced major storms in Typhoon Soudelor in 2015, then Super Typhoon Yuto in 2018, which was the second strongest in the world and in history that hit the CNMI. Just a couple of months ago, Typhoon Mawar devastated Guam after two decades of near-miss, not to mention the impact of COVID-19 islandwide and worldwide. The increasing challenges faced by the insurance industry continues. Insurance pays big time to help an insured, an economy, or a country to recover and get back on its feet and our industry has to raise the bar to counter and meet all these demands if we are to stay in the long haul. The insurance industry has to unite in the form of association to rally together with the interest of the insurance companies, agencies stakeholders, and the insuring public's needs in mind and must be in balance in promoting tort reforms, community service, risk awareness and other initiatives.

Gol Corpuz
President, Northern Marianas Insurance Association

Department of Commerce
WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
P.O. Box 5795 CHRB, Saipan MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8018/8024 • Fax (670) 664-8074
Website: www.commerce.gov.mp

A special congratulatory message to the Northern Marianas Insurance Association's 40th Years of Trust and Security

On behalf of the Department of Commerce's Insurance Commissioner and the Worker's Compensation Commission Team, we would like to extend our warm congratulations for the milestone that your organization has reached. Your organization continue to pursue its mission in protecting the CNMI consumers while providing good insight into the insurance industry to best serve the public.

This amazing accomplishment is just one step in your journey and will improve the organization's success and many to come.

The work that NMIA do as insurance professionals plays a vital role in providing financial resilience against disasters and gives the clients a sense of safety and security in the toughest times.

In accord with your organization, we see NMIA's commitment to build a stronger CNMI through the provision of safeguards for families and businesses.

Sincerely,

FRANCISCO D. CABRERA
Acting Secretary/Acting Insurance Commissioner
Acting Worker's Compensation Commissioner

40 Years of TRUST and SECURITY

Vizion Insurance congratulates the **Northern Marianas Insurance Association (NMIA)** on this special occassion. Cheers to **40** years!

OUR VISION
To provide insurance solutions for all, in order to be the leading non-life insurance provider in the CNMI.

VIZION INSURANCE

OUR MISSION
To help secure your future by going further to serve you better.

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NMIA celebrates 40 years of serving the CNMI

By TERI M. FLORES
Correspondent

The Northern Marianas Insurance Association is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and association president Gol Corpuz is proud to share that the group continues to make a difference in the lives of their clients as well as the wider CNMI community.

"We are going strong at 40 and we expect to continue growing and contributing our time and resources both to our members and to the community, especially after calamities and during their time of need," said Corpuz.

Under its bylaws, NMIA considers itself a non-profit organization, which was primarily created with the goal of fostering the professional, social, and educational association of insurance companies, general agents, subagents, brokers and adjusters doing business in the CNMI.

Composed of 12 insurance companies that operate in the Northern Marianas, they provide the CNMI insureds with a varied list of insurance products ranging from automobile, health, homeowners, personal accident, and bonds, to workers' compensation, among others.

Advocacy

While it is primarily meant as a social group, the NMIA's greatest work can best be considered its ability to work with policy makers by introducing reforms in the civil justice system as well as in improving current policies and legislation that affect the local insurance sector and CNMI insureds.

Throughout its existence, the NMIA has been particularly instrumental in assisting the Department of Commerce in providing guidelines toward the implementation of significant legislation, which includes Public Law 11-55, which is the Mandatory Liability Auto Insurance Act.

Corpuz said the enactment of this law serves as a safeguard for innocent third-party victims injured by a motorist to recover medical or even death expenses by making insurance coverage a mandatory insurance requirement. This law also provides that vehicles cannot be registered without the vehicle owner securing a mandatory liability insurance of $15,000 per person/$30,000 per accident for bodily injury and $15,000 per accident for property damage in place.

Additionally, with help from the NMIA, the enactment of public laws on "No Direct Action," "Bad Faith" and "Capping Non-Economic Damages at $300,000" has helped lessen litigations, which is good for both the industry and the insuring public as it minimizes the spending of funds and resources through unnecessary litigation costs.

Building a strong working relationship not just among members but especially with industry stakeholders is quite important to the organization.

"We develop and sustain relationships with legislators and policy makers by inviting them to our NMIA meetings as guest speakers. Occasionally, our association joins government-sponsored events like beautification programs and exhibits to network and to sustain our working relationship with them," said Corpuz.

NMIA's founding members

It was the need to provide

See NMIA on Page 20

40 Years
of
TRUST and SECURITY
Congratulations
on 40 years of providing exceptional insurance services.
The Northern Marianas Insurance Association has truly made a positive impact.
From management and staff of
TAKAGI & ASSOCIATES, INC
T&A
ABOUT US
Takagi & Associates, Inc. is a family-owned company specializing in professional risk management and traditional products that cater to personal and commercial customers alike.
Additional Insurance Services Include:
• Surplus Line • Insurance Brokerage • Risk management Consulting including Captive Insurance Management
Takagi & Associates' principals and staff offer over 200 years of combined professional insurance experience in Japan, Hawaii, and the U.S.
Takagi & Associates, Inc. represents well know and highly rated international insurance companies including:
Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance Company, Limited – Annual sales of more than $8 USD Billion, Rated "A" by Best's and "A+" by Standard & Poors.
Saipan CNMI Office: Marina Heights, MH I Building Suite 100 Puerto Rico, Saipan, MP 96950
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Congratulations to the

Northern Marianas Insurance Association

Thank you for helping the people of CNMI for *40* years.

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CENTURY INSURANCE CORP.

Strong business relationships a cornerstone of its success

By TERI M. FLORES
Correspondent

Thirty-five years ago, Century Insurance Corp. joined the Northern Marianas' finance and insurance sector and remains one of the formidable companies in the region today that offers property and casualty insurance to insureds in Guam and the CNMI. CIC's product line also includes coverage for workers compensation, commercial vehicle, and public liability insurance.

CIC general manager Gol Corpuz attributes this success to CIC's unwavering commitment to providing its insureds with the most practical insurance solutions to manage their risks. "Our goal is to ensure that we build value for our stakeholders with the approach of getting optimum results, from applying professional insurance practices, to keeping up our technical competencies and providing excellent customer service. The fourth and most important aspect is embodying a corporate culture that values giving by actively contributing to the community where we do business."

A 31-year veteran of CIC, Corpuz began his career as a senior underwriter, working his way up to his current position as general manager. It is this same spirit of giving that gives Corpuz the pride to be a member of the team and the desire to remain a CIC employee. "I take pride that our company is very active in helping the community during times of calamities through either in-kind or monetary donations. This help also extends to our employees within CIC and [parent company] TanHoldings Corp.

■■■

CIC's climb to market dominance began in 1988 when it entered the local finance and insurance sector as a subagent for Moylans Underwriters Insurance. Two years into the business, CIC became a full-fledged insurance carrier in 1990.

By building and sustaining long lasting alliances and relationships with customers, business partners and vendors, CIC was able to hold its dominance in the local finance and insurance sector from 2004 to date.

Its strong ties with two retail agents known for their integrity and strong reputations in the CNMI and in Micronesia—Aon Micronesia and the Joeten Group through Pacifica Underwriters Insurance—has helped catapult CIC to the top.

Describing the benefits of its collaboration with AON, Corpuz said, "Working with Aon Re helped us secure our first AM Best Rating with B+. Their guidance that stemmed from years of various client experience on rating issues was invaluable. … Thanks also to AON, our head office in Guam also attained a higher AM Best rating of B++ (Very Good) through the infusion of more capital."

It also helped that, as a subsidiary of TanHoldings Corp., CIC was able to build captive accounts. By virtue of this relationship, CIC has covered almost a third of the market share since 2004 until the present.

Another strategic decision that contributed to CIC's success was the company's decision to reinsure through a worldwide known Aon reinsurance broker and reinsurer Gen Re, which is also the highest AM Best-rated reinsurer. Gen Re is a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway that is owned by Warren Buffet, known to all as one of the richest men in the world.

Corpuz believes that CIC has reaped the benefits of this approach which has gained the company repeat business, referrals, and even partnerships that have helped the business grow and expand.

"We have made building relationships and partnerships our business. Building relationships with the client is more important to CIC over and above just selling them insurance products. In fact, our records show that we continue to retain 90% to 95% of our clients despite the economic downturn," said Corpuz.

Underscoring the importance of staying connected with clients both in the good, but most importantly, during the hard and challenging times, is crucial, said Corpuz.

"Our former president, David M. Sablan, provided the template for us on how we should treat our clients and customers. TanHoldings' chief executive officer Jerry Tan and CIC president George Chiu further promote this corporate value that has been one of our guiding principles. …By making ourselves accessible to clients and partners, we show our sincerity and that we are invested in their success. Saying hello or treating your clients to lunch or dinner might not be much of an ROI (return of investment) [but] it is about building relationships."

Recognizing clients as part of CIC's growth has also contributed much to the company's success. Corpuz explains. "We are one of the few insurance carriers in the CNMI and Micronesia that offers risk management solutions to clients and give them recommendations on certain hazards for the safety and betterment of their assets and facilities. By doing this, we have forged long-term business relationships that haven led to brand advocates and successful outcomes."

To attest to this, CIC hosts regular fetes for its valued and loyal customers, agents and brokers—a tradition that began when the company hit its 10th year milestone. Most recently, CIC's partners and customers were honored in joint anniversary celebrations of CIC and TanHoldings Corp.

Practicing reciprocity in business relationships is another virtue that CIC has gained from. "Strong business relationships are about being mutually beneficial to one another. A good example is T&T—Tenorio and Tan. Our company and our team members patronize the businesses of the Joeten group of companies on a fair and equal basis, with employees from both companies enjoying discounts from both businesses," said Corpuz.

Of course, not to be missed is the prudent underwriting by CIC's experienced team, which also helps CIC maintain its market dominance.

As what great companies are known to do, CIC followed this lead by first growing its existing assets and capabilities and ensuring continuous strong performance before opening its doors in the neighboring island of Guam.

Taking advantage of a qualifying certificate from the Guam Economic Development Authority, CIC branched out to Guam as part of its long-term plan for growth. In 2006, CIC became a domestic company in Guam and it eventually became the head office for both Saipan and Papua New Guinea branches, becoming the hub for the company's management team. Two years ago, CIC divested its stake in its PNG branch to concentrate more on its growing business in Guam and the CNMI.

"The demography of Guam and Saipan are very similar. Hence branching out to Guam is not a difficult task as compared to branching to Papua New Guinea," said Corpuz.

The company is currently doing its due diligence to explore opportunities outside of the Micronesian region. "We balance future plans of expansion with growth, correct risk assessment through feasibility studies as well as consultations with our experienced business partners in both retail and the international market," he said.

NORTHERN MARIANAS INSURANCE ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1983
40 Years
OF TRUST AND SECURITY
Congratulations
to the Northern Marianas Insurance Association on reaching the impressive milestone of 40 years!
FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF
CIC
Century Insurance Co., Ltd.
A TanHoldings Company
JP Center Ground Floor, Beach Road, Garapan Office
Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m • www.centuryinsurancegroup.net
Guam +1(671) 648-0609 Saipan +1(670) 234-0609

Membership Directory

AIUP
ASSOCIATED INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS OF THE PACIFIC, INC.

How many years have you been a member of NMIA: Since 1985

Name of carrier/partner: Pacific Indemnity Insurance Company

PACIFIC INDEMNITY INSURANCE COMPANY

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA: The purpose of having an industry association is to identify industry best practices, monitor the conduct of members with regard to dealings with the public and identify, discuss, and protect the public from emerging risk exposures. We have found the NMIA to be of great value in these regards. We enjoy working together with the fullest respect, and the knowledge that we are united for the best interest of the people in the CNMI. This is our obligation and duty to do just that.

PACIFIC BASIN INSURANCE, CO.

How many years have you been a member of NMIA? We became an official member just this year (July 2023).

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA? As a member of the NMIA, we are able to contribute in upholding the insurance policies and standards for the benefit of the insuring public and the insurance providers as well.

TAKAGI & ASSOCIATES, INC
T&A

How many years have you been a member of NMIA? Since 1994

Name of company partners?(Carrier) Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance Co., Ltd.

MS&AD Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance Co.,Ltd.

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA?
Being part of NMIA, we are able to discuss and share information regarding our insurance industry. As group we have strong support to inform our community about the importance of insurance to protect from financial risks.

CALVO'S insurance 85 YEARS
Protecting Micronesia for 85 Years

How many years have you been a member of NMIA? Since 1989 (34 years)

Name of Carriers/Company partners? National Union Fire Insurance Company of Pitts., Pa.

A CAPITAL STOCK COMPANY
NATIONAL UNION FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY OF PITTSBURGH, PA.

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA?
Being a member of the NMIA we can bring new expertise and ideas, address the challenges and the risks we all face in the CNMI.
We are stronger together as a group of professional leaders to innovate for the betterment of our community.

EICI
EQUITABLE INSURANCE CO., INC.

How many years have you been a member of NMIA? Since 1983

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA? We benefit from being well-informed on insurance matters within our community and discuss any necessary updates concerning rates, changes on forms, and most importantly, giving back to the community.

MOYLAN'S INSURANCE
HOME OF THE GOOD GUYS & GALS

How many years as a member of NMIA: Moylan's was a member since 1984.

Name of carrier/partners:

NetCare Life & Health Insurance · FIRSTNET INSURANCE COMPANY · EQUITABLE ADJUSTING & SERVICE COMPANY · DB Insurance

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA: Being a member of the NMIA has granted us "open book" access to any and all information and activities shared amongst the members. We have established a closer bond with each member company and have garnered experience working together in making things happen that would benefit and/or improve the beliefs and practices of the insurance association, as well as the insurance industry as a whole. We are also recognized by the community as being a part of the sole property & casualty insurance association in existence here in the CNMI.

CIC
Century Insurance Co., Ltd.
A TanHoldings Company

How many years have you been a member of NMIA?: Since 1996

Name of company partners? Century Insurance Company Ltd./Century Insurance Company (Guam) Ltd.

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA? It gives the company prestige and credibility to our clientele and/or customers that we service by being a member. It gives us a voice in the Legislature with regards to tort reforms. It protects rates and/or tariff through regulations. It allows us the opportunity to give back to the public through community outreach. It helps staff on trainings sponsored by the association. It develops partnership with co-members of the association.

pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc. Rest Assured.

How many years have you been a member of NMIA? 40 Years

Name of carrier/partner: Pacific Indemnity Insurance Company

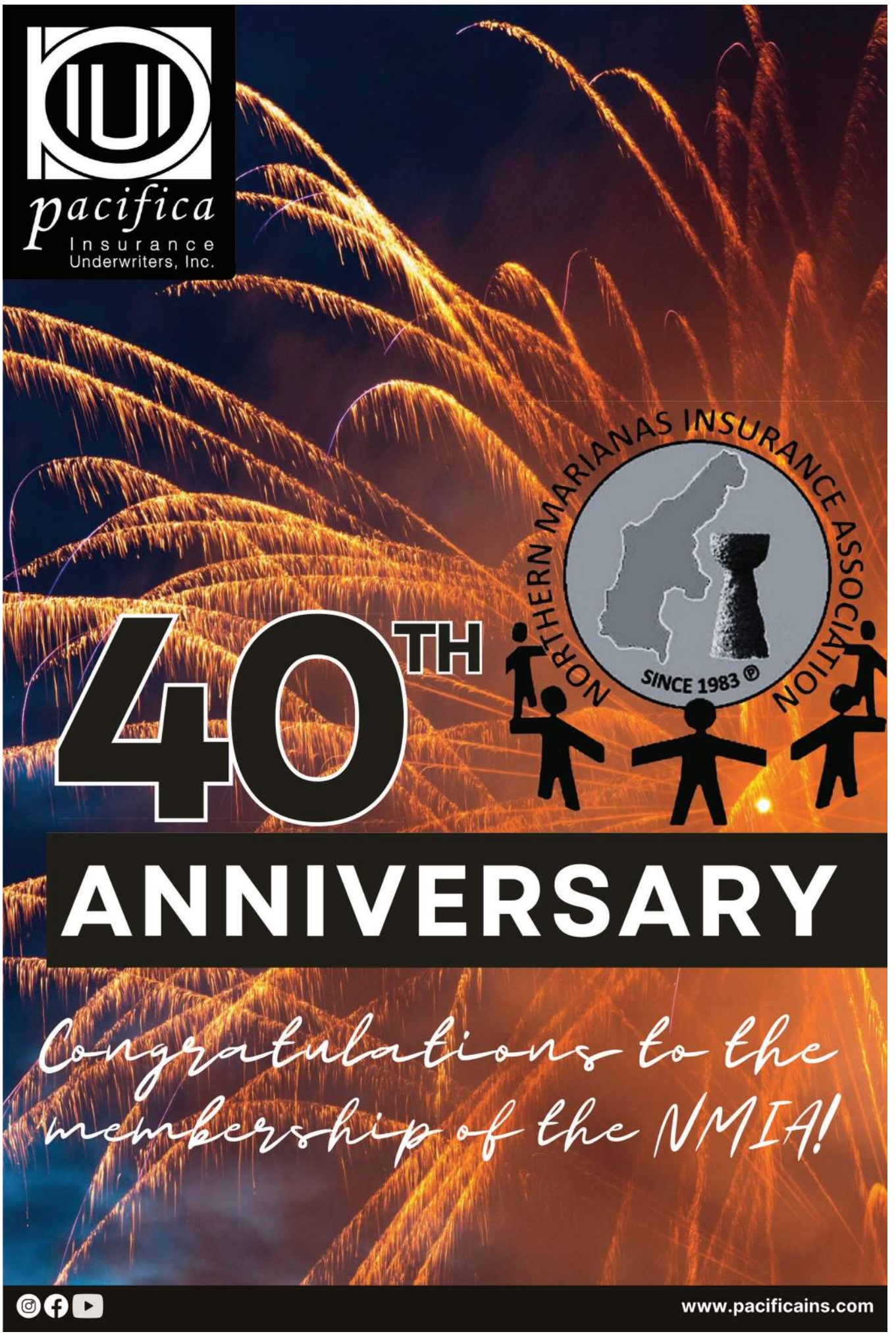
TOKIO MARINE PACIFIC

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA?
"The NMIA is an organization that includes top admitted carriers in the CNMI that work collaboratively to provide reliable insurance coverage to consumers. The industry continues to play a vital role in the development, growth and advancement of the CNMI. As a group working in unison towards a common goal, we are confident that there will be continuity in the work that we do as insurance professionals to help manage financial risks and ensure financial protection and security. We are grateful for the partnership with other members of the NMIA and for the support of stakeholders, regulators and consumers." - Jessica Sablan, PIUI underwriting manager

VIZION INSURANCE

How many years have you been a member of NMIA? We became an official member just this year (May 2023).

How do you benefit as a member of NMIA? As a member of the NMIA, we have continued to provide our services to our growing number of policyholders on the island. We have also expanded our reach while still upholding ethical standards and contributing to the activities for the betterment of the insurance industry and the community.



NMIA

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insurance coverage to local businesses that paved the way for the creation of the first insurance company in the CNMI. In 1962, businessman Edward Milne came to Saipan and put up the first Joeten village stores. When he could not find insurance coverage for these stores, Milne joined forces in 1965 with established businessmen Jose C. Tenorio, Manny Villagomez, Olympio T. Borja, Lorenzo Guerrero, Herman "Pan" Guerrero and former governor Pete P. Tenorio and established the Micronesian Insurance Underwriters Inc. It was MIUI that came to be the first insurance underwriter from the Northern Marianas that operated business in the Micronesian region, selling life insurance policies. Later, it merged with the Guam-owned Moylan's Insurance Underwriters Inc.

It took 18 years after the CNMI's first insurance company was established for Public Law 3 -107 or the Commonwealth Insurance Act of 1983 to be enacted. The creation of the Insurance Commissioner's Office under the CNMI Department of Commerce through Public Law 3-107 served as the impetus for the creation of the NMIA.

Banding together to address the lack of tort reforms at that time to protect both the insurance industry and the insuring public, a small group of insurance professionals founded the NMIA.

The first NMIA board of directors had Alex Tudela, the co-owner of Equitable Insurance, as its president, with Tony Peters as his vice president, while Margaret Palacios acted as the group's secretary. On its second year of existence, Edward Milne was elected vice president of the board. Today, industry pioneer Maggie George is still active as the owner of Associated Insurance Underwriters. Currently, the NMIA board represents a good cross-section of the local insurance sector.

The original members may have been limited to representatives of property and general agents, but it has evolved to a more diverse membership that includes domestic, foreign, and alien insurers, agents, adjusters and brokers.

From its humble beginnings, the NMIA grew steadily through the years. "It took a lot of hard work for the NMIA pioneers to come together as a group. Inadequate funding and what seemed was a lackluster government support were not a deterrence, so they pushed through. We would not have reached our level of maturity today without the initiative of our founding members," said Corpuz. "Today, the NMIA continues to live up to its goal of listening to the concerns of member companies and finding solutions to these concerns. As a group, they make it a priority to offer advice to members and draw on and benefit from each other's expertise as well as international communities."

This relationship among NMIA members has given them the ability to respond to changing times and needs.

Corpuz is himself a 35-year veteran of the local insurance sector and a four-time NMIA president. Between holding the organization's presidency, Corpuz also held various posts, from being vice president, a 10-term treasurer and as director of the group, which he served twice.

Under his leadership, the NMIA continues to maintain its link with lawmakers and policy makers within the Department of Commerce, the Insurance Commissioner's Office, and the Worker's Compensation Commission Office.

According to Corpuz, the NMIA's current priorities include "working on revisions to the Workers Compensation and Automobile Tariff law as well as adjusting benefits and limits that are fair and reasonable to both insurers and the insuring public."

Community involvement

Undoubtedly, the insurance sector of any community makes a significant contribution particularly in the form of taxes, funding, and investments in the local economy.

In recent years, with the spate of back-to-back super typhoons that hit the islands, the local insurance sector has been very busy acting with urgency to help the insureds get back on their feet, either through the reconstruction of homes or resumption of businesses.

As an extension of their core business, Corpuz said community involvement is important to them. "It is our way of giving back to the insuring public, aside from paying their claims to recover their losses," he said.

Corpuz said the NMIA has partnered with the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter, Karidat Social Services, and the Salvation Army through monetary donations benefiting the community, especially after super typhoons Soudelor and Yutu. Individual members of the group have also donated separately for disaster relief.

But more than the help they give after a disaster, the NMIA proactively participates in supporting educational and scholarship grants given through the Northern Marianas College, said Corpuz. These scholarships are meant to encourage students to work in the CNMI, particularly in the insurance sector. The NMIA plans to introduce this same program at Marianas High School by school year 2024.

Another key educational initiative that the NMIA invests in is its collaboration with the CNMI Public School System. Dubbed as the "Master of Disaster" this 2001 initiative provides public school

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40 Years
OF TRUST AND SECURITY

HEARTFELT
Congratulations

on 40 years of excellence!
The Northern Marianas Insurance Association is
a shining example of perseverance and growth.

FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF

For 85 years, Calvo's Insurance has been providing comprehensive business and personal protection to the Guam and the CNMI community combining local knowledge with the financial strength from the world's leading insurance companies.

The most trusted name in insurance, we offer professional insurance protection that comes from years of experience in covering thousands of customers.

Street address: 2666 Beach Road Chalan Laulau
P.O. Box 500035 Chalan Kanoa Saipan MP 96950

Contact Nos.: Personal Lines | Property & Casualty
Phone No.: (670) 234-5691 / 5694 | **Fax No.** (670) 234-5693

Website: calvos.com

SERVICES:

Fire and Allied Lines | Auto | Workers Compensation | Home Owners | Commercial Liability | Marine Cargo

CALVO'S insurance 85 YEARS
Protecting Micronesia for 85 Years

Insurance Company: National Union Fire Insurance Company of Pittsburgh, Pa. (A Member Company of AIG)

Celebrating four decades of remarkable achievements!

NORTHERN MARIANAS INSURANCE ASSOCIATION SINCE 1983

40 Years
OF TRUST AND SECURITY

Congratulations
to the Northern Marianas Insurance Association for 40 years of encouraging industry best practices and ensuring the people of the CNMI are fairly treated with regard to their insurance needs.

AIUP
PACIFIC INDEMNITY INSURANCE COMPANY

Pacific Indemnity Insurance Company & Associated Insurance Underwriters of the Pacific (General Agent)
Office Location: Beach Road, Garapan | Mailing Address: P.O. Box 501369, Saipan, MP 96950
Email: aiup@pticom.com | Tel.: (670) 234-7222 / (670) 234-6865 | Fax: (670) 234-5367

Congratulations to the Northern Marianas Insurance Association (NMIA) on your 40th Anniversary.

Health Plan Accredited by
AAAHC
ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.

Elevating the member/patient experience
TakeCare Insurance Company, Inc.
The First accredited Health Plan on Guam.

TakeCare Insurance Company, Inc. has achieved another three year health plan accreditation by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC). Through AAAHC accreditation, health plans demonstrate their commitment to providing high quality services and patient care for their members.

Health plans seeking accreditation by AAAHC undergo an extensive self-assessment and a rigorous on-site survey by AAAHC expert surveyors – physicians, nurses, and administrators who are actively involved in health care organizations. Below are the characteristics that are indicative of an accreditable health plan.

Quality and Standards of Care

- Member Rights, Responsibilities, Protections
- Provider Network Credentialing
- Quality Improvements
- Health Education/Wellness Promotion
- Network Adequacy
- Governance
- Case Management/Care Coordination
- Risk Management
- Environment of Care and Safety
- Administration

TakeCare
A TanHoldings Company
takecareasia.com
Connect with us

Customer Service (670) 235-0994
Our Island, Your Health Plan

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students from kindergarten to junior high school the skills and the preparedness ability to act on urgent situations and disasters. The group also makes disaster preparedness literature readily available to everyone in the community with the dissemination of hand-outs and brochures.

NMIA members can take advantage of regular seminars and training, the most recent of which is on general insurance practices on safety and OSHA general industry safety standards and guidelines. This training in March 2022 was organized in partnership with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and was attended by over 30 professionals in the insurance, construction, and other industrial fields.

Access to shared information is another advantage NMIA members enjoy but Corpuz emphasizes that safety and caution remains paramount, especially when confidentiality of information is to be considered, "Each member company has their own insurance system and mobile app that works for them. Sharing claims information is welcome among members, particularly when a customer transfers from one company to another. The association, however, is mindful about the confidentiality of information of our clients. While technology is a must in our day and age for efficiently servicing clients, it must be balanced with caution because of cyber risk while protecting the client's confidential information," said Corpuz.

Access to information also means that NMIA members are given notice of any ongoing bills that may affect the insurance industry. Tariff as formulated by NMIA and approved by the Department of Commerce and the Insurance Commissioner's Office are only shared to group members.

In keeping with the times, the NMIA in May 2022 launched its website, where the insuring public can access and inquire online about their insurance concerns—both for the group or for individual members. Email addresses and contact numbers of each member company are also linked and available on the site, in case there is a need for information about, and from, a specific company or about the insurance association.

NMIA and the future

As the NMIA inches toward a new year in its history as a collective voice for the local insurance sector, Corpuz sees the group continuing its role as a major voice in catering to and promoting fair and reasonable insurance practices in the CNMI. "Our focus will remain connected to our charter and bylaws and continue the legacy and intent of our founding members," he said.

The NMIA's immediate and future plans include assisting the office of the Insurance Commissioner in adjusting the tariff for the Workers Compensation of 1989 and the Auto Tariff of 1999. Both tariffs are currently not on par with the current wages and conditions of the market. "We will also be working with our legal counsel and our lawmakers to ensure that these proposed changes in the in-

See NMIA on Page 24

40 Years
of
TRUST and SECURITY
Congratulations
Northern Marianas
Insurance Association
on reaching this significant
milestone. Your contributions
have made a positive difference
in the lives of many.
From the management and staff of:
PACIFIC BASIN
INSURANCE, CO.
Office Address: Main Office Beach Road Chalan LauLau Saipan, CNMI • Branch Office: Beach Road Chalan Piao Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 500710, Saipan, MP 96950
Email Address: pacificbasininsurance@gmail.com | Telephone Number: Tel. 670-234-5860 • 670-234-7868

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surances laws will gain legislative approval," said Corpuz.

While changes in government, which include policy and policymakers, may be a challenge to manage, the NMIA will remain apolitical to ensure that the interest of the industry is protected, the NMIA president said.

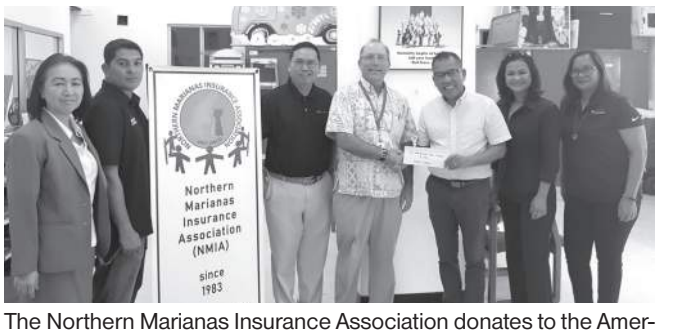
Most importantly. the NMIA will continue its community outreach programs focusing on insurance education, creating awareness within the insuring public about risk and catastrophe, as well as charitable contributions as the group's funds may allow.

The Northern Marianas Insurance Association donates to Karidat Social Services after Super Typhoon Yutu. NMIA

The Northern Marianas Insurance Association presents scholarship checks. NMIA

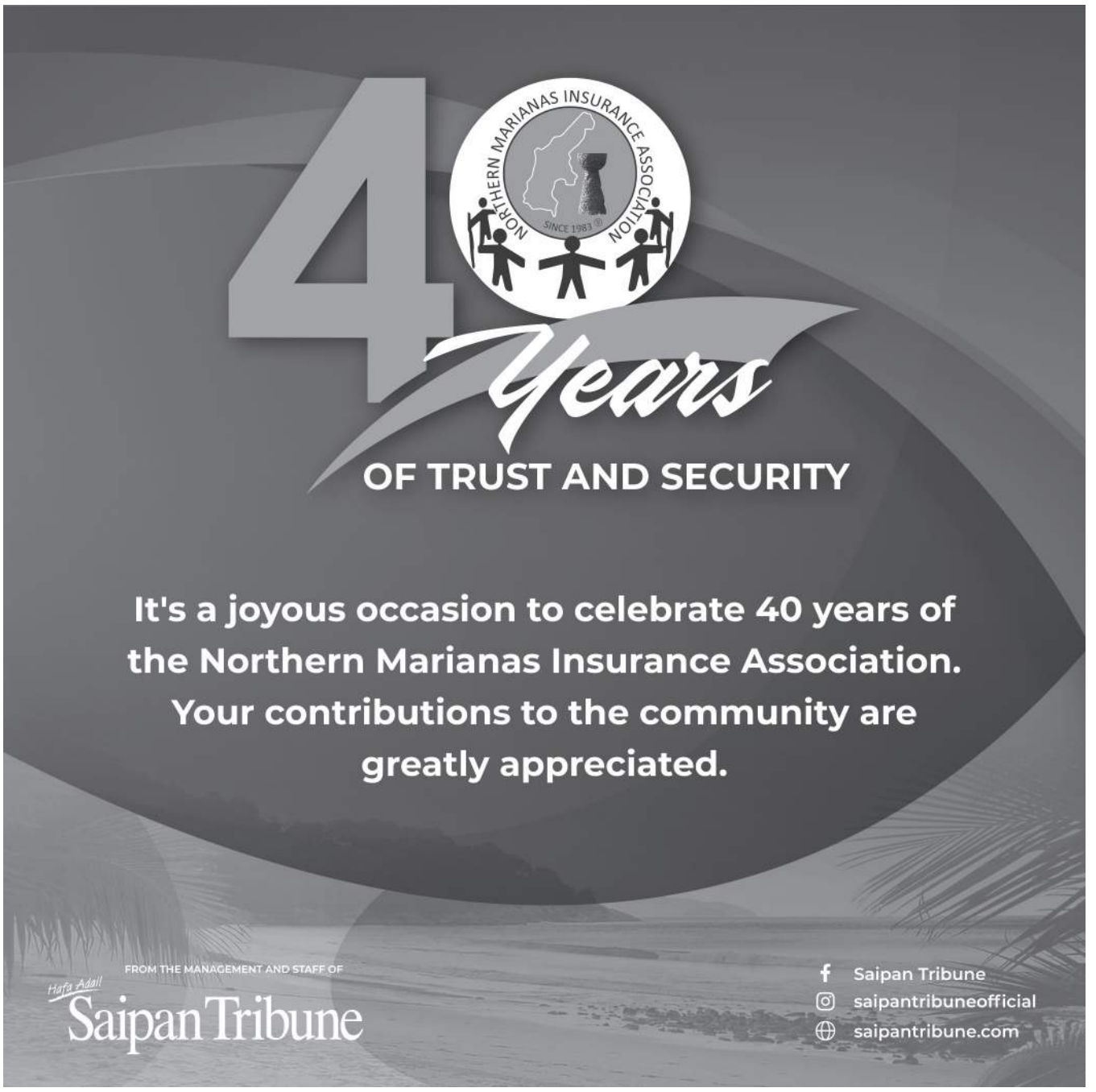
Northern Marianas Insurance Association officers pose in front of a bus stop they adopted and spruced up. NMIA

Northern Marianas Insurance Association Insurance and OSHA Safety Training at the Saipan World Resort in 2022. NMIA



The Northern Marianas Insurance Association donates to the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter after Super Typhoon Yutu. NMIA

The Northern Marianas Insurance Association donates to the Salvation Army after Super Typhoon Yutu. NMIA


NORTHERN MARIANAS INSURANCE ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1983
40 Years
OF TRUST AND SECURITY
It's a joyous occasion to celebrate 40 years of the Northern Marianas Insurance Association. Your contributions to the community are greatly appreciated.
FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
Saipan Tribune
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saipantribune.com

DOI chief Haaland caps Pacific tour with a visit to FSM

PALIKIR, FSM—Interior Secretary Deb Haaland wrapped a weeklong trip to the Pacific Islands today, including visits to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Haaland led the U.S. delegation for the inauguration of the 10th President of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E. Wesley W. Simina. Vice President Aaron Palik and members of the newly constituted 23rd Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) were also inaugurated. The FSM is one of three freely associated states in the Pacific whose relationship with the United States is underpinned by a Compact of Free Association (Compact).

Haaland, assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor, and deputy assistant to the President and Asian American and Pacific Islander senior liaison Erika L. Moritsugu met with the newly inaugurated president and highlighted the Biden-Harris administration's ongoing commitment to the prosperity of the FSM. They also discussed the importance of the negotiations regarding the extension of economic assistance under the Compact of Free Association.

Haaland also announced $976,918 in Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Program grant funds that will support several projects and programs in Pohnpei and Yap States, including:

- $250,162 to Pohnpei State Government to meet requirements for a management unit for the Nan Madol World Heritage Site and conduct vegetation removal and management training;
- $198,304 to the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation for technical assistance support to Yap State to conduct a comprehensive review of the Dinay Water Reservoir;
- $195,492 to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for technical support to Pohnpei State for Pohnpei Utility Corporation's Photovoltaic and Island Energy Systems optimization project;
- $176,960 to The Nature Conservancy in support of developing capacity among local conservation partners who manage marine and terrestrial resources across the FSM; and
- $156,000 to the Pohnpei State Office of the Public Auditor for training.

On May 23, 2023, the United States and the FSM signed an agreement marking the successful conclusion of Compact-related negotiations to extend economic assistance beyond 2023. The Administration's proposal to extend economic assistance to the Federated States of Micronesia beyond 2023 under the Compact of Free Association is being considered by the U.S. Congress.

During their weeklong visit to the Pacific Islands, Haaland, Cantor, and Moritsugu also visited the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, where they met with CNMI leadership and visited natural and cultural resources across the island. The visit highlighted how President Biden's Investing in America agenda is making significant investments in climate resilience and ecosystem restoration in CNMI.

In Guam, the delegation met with the territory's leadership, visited historical sites intended to conserve and interpret outstanding natural, scenic and historic values and objects of the island of Guam, and met with Interior Department staff.

Haaland, Cantor, and Moritsugu also traveled to the Republic of Palau. ***(DOI)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENT, CYBER RESILIENCE PROGRAM AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-012-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (Authority) is inviting qualified cybersecurity consulting firms (Proposers) to provide a Cybersecurity Infrastructure Assessment Report (CIAR) and to develop a Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan (CIRP) and a task-based CIRP Implementation Plan.

The RFP Package is available beginning June 26, 2023, at the Authority's Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport upon payment of an administrative fee of $50.00 payable to the "Commonwealth Ports Authority". Payment shall be by cash, certified cashier's check, postal money order, or credit card. All applicants shall pay the reasonable administrative fee of $50.00 to receive a copy of the proposal.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

RFP Issued Date	June 26, 2023
Applicant Briefing at CPA Meeting Room	July 07, 2023 (10:30 A.M.)
Deadline to Submit Questions	July 14, 2023
Deadline to Submit Proposals	July 28, 2023 (4:00 PM)
Evaluation's Committee's Selection	August 4, 2023
Execution of Professional Services Agreement	August 11, 2023
Project Completion	September 15, 2023

Qualified proposers shall submit their proposals sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Cybersecurity Assessment, Cyber Resilience Program, and Implementation Plan, Project No. CPA-RFP-012-23". Proposals must be submitted no later than **4:00 p.m. Local Time, July 28, 2023,** to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the proposal submittal deadline shall be returned to the proposer unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted if sufficient justification exist that awarding the project would not be in the best interest of the CPA.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-077

Opening Date: Friday, July 21, 2023
Closing Date: Thursday, August 3, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	**Purchasing Technician**
DEPARTMENT:	**COA/Procurement & Supply**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$22,865.00 to $30,867.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Four (4)**

The incumbent will be under the general supervision as assigned by the Executive Director. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Procurement & Supply Division.

Duties:

- Purchasing records maintenance; purchase order processing; preparing voucher reports, performing data entry; processing quotations; and assisting with vendor relationship management.
- Receives purchase requisition vouchers for materials, parts and/or services and reviews vouchers for complete information and authorization.
- Determines and contacts vendors by phone or sends requests for quotations to vendors via email or fax; monitors due dates for quotations; reviews quotations upon receipt; awards small purchase bids based on lowest cost, lead time, availability, requirements, vendor support and payment terms.
- Processes and distributes purchase orders and related correspondence; enters and updates system records; prepares justification documentation for vendor selection and bid awards; organizes and maintains files and records.
- Monitors and follows up on purchase orders and payment schedules; works with accounts payable on prepayment requirements.
- Creates and monitors ticklers to follows up on project status.
- Monitors and follows up on contractors' performance evaluations from project managers.
- Collects information from respective project managers and files and creates summary reports.
- Coordinates and attends meetings with Bid/Proposal Committees as assigned.
- Researches and provides findings for contract disputes and protests.
- Prepares forms for review and signatures.
- Coordinates pick-up and delivery of materials, parts and/or services with internal and external customers.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education and four (4) years of experience related to purchasing. Proficiency in the applications of Microsoft software – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Record keeping methods; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Reviewing documents for completion and appropriate authorization; Contacting vendors to gather purchase information; Reviewing quotations for specific criteria and awarding bids for small purchases; Processing and distributing purchase orders and related documents; Updating and maintaining purchase data in system; Monitoring schedules and due dates; Organizing and maintaining files and records; Coordinating service deliveries; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-025

AGAG BOOSTER PUMP AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Agag Booster Pump and Electrical System Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading the existing Agag Booster Pump Station (AG); rehabilitation of existing Agag concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the Agag site; renovation of the existing chlorine and electrical building; installation of a new booster pump (triplex system); construction of a new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting at the Agag site; and site improvements and grading. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 185 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **July 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-23-025, Agag Booster Pump and Electrical System Upgrade"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) August 2, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on July 17, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician via address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Business

Kiara's Gift Shop moves farther south

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Now you can indulge in your green thumb hobby at Kiara's Garden and then shop for clothes, shoes, and what-not across the street at Kiara's Gift Shop.

This, after Kiara's Gift Shop relocated further south along Beach Road in Koblerville from the old Best Market Building in Chalan Monsignor Martinez in Afetna, where it originally opened in April 2022.

"We opened today and will soon be transferring other items here and the old location will become a wholesale store for home goods like clothes and shoes to accommodate customers who just want bigger volume," said Kiara's Gift Shop administrative assistant Jasmine Umbay.

Since opening last year, Kiara's Garden has been the go-to place for hard-to-find ready-to-wear clothes and accessories like bags, shoes, toys, and home decor.

"It's hard to get clothes here that have sizes, good quality, and affordable price and I think Kiara's Gift Shop provides that. Here we have good quality items that are also affordable and caters to a lot of our customers," said Umbay.

Owner Dhez Javier said her lifelong ambition has always been to open a business like Kiara's Gift Shop.

Aside from Kiara's Garden and now Kiara's Gift Shop, Javier has also successfully operated Loving Hands Daycare for the past 17 years.

She said opening Kiara's Gift Shop a year ago and then opening a bigger store to complement Kiara's Garden is sort of an endorsement that despite the times, she's confident that the economy will bounce back soon.

"I'm a risk-taker. I don't expect business to boom right away. Even at my daycare it took awhile before it became successful. You need patience, honesty to customers/clients, and hard work and of course love everything that you do to succeed," said Javier.

More than a dozen of Javier's friends and family attended the blessing of the new Kiara's Gift Shop last Wednesday with Fr. Jason Granado leading the rites.

"I'd like to invite everyone to come and visit Kiara's Gift Shop in Koblerville. I also want to extend a big thank you to our loyal customers for always supporting us," added Javier.

Currently, Kiara's Gift Shop has a soft opening/back-to-school promotion where selected items on the store are 25%-50% off until August.

The newly relocated Kiara's Gift Shop is open every day from 9am to 7:30pm. For more information, call (670) 989-1062 and (670) 288-8480. Kiara's Gift Shop can also be contacted via their Facebook page.

MARK RABAGO

Kiara's Gift Shop owner Dhez Javier, fifth from right, poses with staff and friends after the blessing of the store led by Fr. Jason Granado last Wednesday.

MARK RABAGO

Kiara's Gift Shop is your new go-to place for hard-to-find ready-to-wear clothes and accessories like bags, shoes, toys, and home decor.

MARK RABAGO

Kiara's Gift Shop has relocated across Kiara's Garden along Beach Road in Koblerville.

Elon Musk wants to turn tweets into 'X's'

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Elon Musk may want to send "tweet" back to the birds, but the ubiquitous term for posting on the site he now calls X is here to stay—at least for now.

For one, the word is still plastered all over the site formerly known as Twitter. Write a post, you still need to press a blue button that says "tweet" to publish it. To repost it, you still tap "retweet."

But it's more than that.

With "tweets," Twitter accomplished in just a few years something few companies have done in a lifetime: It became a verb and implanted itself into the lexicon of America and the world. Upending that takes more than a top-down declaration, even if it is from the owner of Twitter-turned-X, who also happens to be one of the world's richest men.

"Language has always come from the people that use it on a day-to-day basis. And it can't be controlled, it can't created, it can't be morphed. You don't get to decide it," said Nick Bilton, the author of "Hatching Twitter: A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship, and Betrayal" about Twitter's origins.

Twitter didn't start out as Twitter. It was "twttr" — without vowels, which was the trend in 2006 when the platform launched and SMS texting was wildly popular. The iPhone only came out in 2007.

Twitter co-founder Evan Williams "went one day and purchased the vowels, two vowels for essentially $7,500 each," when he bought the URL for twitter.com from a bird enthusiast, Bilton said.

At the beginning, people didn't "tweet" — it was "I'm going to twitter this," Bilton recalled. But "twittered" doesn't roll off the tongue and "tweet" soon took over, first in the Twitter office, then San Francisco, then everywhere.

US economy likely slowed in April-June but still showed resilience

WASHINGTON (AP)—The most aggressive streak of Federal Reserve interest rate hikes in 40 years has slowed the U.S. economy. But to the surprise of many, it hasn't derailed it.

The economy's resilience has been on display for months, and on Thursday the government could provide another encouraging snapshot: Its first estimate of growth in the April-June quarter is expected to show that the gross domestic product—the economy's total output of goods and services—expanded at a modest 1.5% annual rate, according to a survey of forecasters by the data firm FactSet.

A pace of roughly that size would reflect a continuing slowdown from a 2% growth rate in the January-March quarter, 2.6% for the October-December period and 3.2% for July through September of last year. But it would still point to consistent growth.

In fighting inflation, which last year hit a four-decade high, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times in 17 months, most recently on Wednesday. The resulting higher borrowing costs for a broad range of loans — from mortgages and credit cards to auto loans and business borrowing — have taken a toll on growth. But they have yet to tip the United States into a widely forecast recession.

Optimism has been growing that a recession isn't coming after all, that the Fed can engineer a so-called "soft-landing" — slowing the economy enough to bring inflation down to its 2% annual target without wrecking an expansion of surprising durability.

This week, the International Monetary Fund upgraded its forecast for U.S. economic growth for all of 2023 to 1.8%. Though that would be down from 2.1% growth for 2022, it marked an increase from the 1.6% growth that the IMF had predicted for 2023 back in April.

At a news conference Wednesday after the Fed announced its latest quarter-point rate hike, Chair Jerome Powell revealed that the central bank's staff economists no longer foresee a recession in the United States. In April, the minutes of the central bank's March meeting had revealed that the Fed's staff economists envisioned a "mild" recession later this year.

In his remarks, Powell noted that the economy has proved resilient despite the Fed's rapid rate hikes. And he said he still thinks a soft landing remains possible.

"My base case is that we will be able to achieve inflation moving back down to our target without the kind of really significant downturn that results in high levels of job losses," the Fed chair said.

By any measure, the American job market has shown itself to be remarkably strong. At 3.6% in June, the unemployment rate hovers just above a five-decade low. A surge in retirements after COVID-19 hit in early 2020 has contributed to a shortage of workers across the country, forcing many companies to raise wages to attract or keep staffers.

Higher pay and job security are giving Americans the confidence and financial wherewithal to keep shopping. Indeed, consumer spending, which drives about 70% of economic activity, rose at a 4.2% annual rate from January through March, the fastest quarterly pace in nearly two years. Americans have kept spending — crowding airplanes, traveling overseas and flocking to concerts and movie theaters.

And the Conference Board, a business research group, reported Tuesday that Americans this month are in their sunniest mood in two years, based on the board's reading of consumer confidence.

Indeed, many consumers are finally enjoying some relief from spiking prices: Year-over-year inflation, which peaked at 9.1% in June 2022, has eased consistently ever since. Inflation-adjusted hourly pay rose 1.4% in June from a year earlier, the sharpest such gain since early 2021.

Nation

AS RECORD TEMPERATURES PERSIST

Biden looks to provide relief from extreme heat

WASHINGTON (AP)—With millions of Americans facing broiling heat across the Southwest, President Joe Biden on Thursday plans to announce new steps to improve weather forecasts and make drinking water more accessible, according to the White House.

He'll be joined by the leaders of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, described the heat wave as "a difficult time" and said Biden was treating climate change with "the urgency it requires."

Climate activists and some Democrats have pushed Biden to declare a climate "emergency," but the White House has resisted.

AP

Boys are silhouetted against the sky at sunset as they run along a ridge at Papago Park, April 1, 2022, in Phoenix.

The mayors of Phoenix and San Antonio, two cities that have suffered from the heat waves, are expected to participate in the White House event virtually.

Phoenix has seen at least 26 days in a row of temperatures exceeding 110 degrees. Maricopa County, where the city is located, reported recently that there were 18 heat-associated deaths between April 11 and July 15. Another 69 deaths remain under investigation. There were 425 heat-associated deaths in the county last year.

San Antonio saw 15 straight days of 100-plus degrees. At least 13 deaths in Texas have been blamed on the extreme heat.

Thursday's announcement follows other steps that the administration has taken to adapt to increasing threats from extreme heat. Among those it is highlighting:

The Department of Labor is developing a standard for how workplaces deal with heat. The proposed rule by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration would require employers to provide adequate water and rest breaks to outdoor workers, as well as medical services and training to address signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. OSHA is holding meetings this summer to hear comments on how the heat standard would affect small businesses.

In order to keep low-income populations cool, the Department of Health and Human Services expanded its Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program to provide more access to air conditioning and cooling centers such as libraries, senior centers or other public buildings. The Environmental Protection Agency also has provided assistance to help communities develop cooling centers within schools.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has been helping cities and towns map "heat islands" with dense buildings and fewer trees, and the Department of Agriculture issued guidance for creating more tree canopy coverage, which helps with cooling environments.

In addition, the administration launched a website called heat.gov with interactive maps, weather forecasts and tips for keeping cool amid record-breaking heat.

More than 100 members of Congress, led by Texas Democratic Reps. Greg Casar and Sylvia Garcia and Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif., have called on the administration to implement the new heat standard for outdoor workers as quickly as possible.

"We know extreme weather events such as heat waves are becoming more frequent and more dangerous due to climate change. Urgent action is needed to prevent more deaths," the lawmakers wrote in a letter Monday.

The United Farm Workers and other groups also called on OSHA to immediately issue a nationwide rule protecting outdoor workers after farm worker deaths this month in Florida and Arizona.

"Farm workers need and deserve the access to shade, water and paid breaks," said UFW President Teresa Romero. "How many more workers will we let dangerous heat and callous employers kill before this nation acts?"

Trump wants to see Biden impeached, other Republicans are quick to pile on

WASHINGTON (AP)—Donald Trump wants to see President Joe Biden impeached, and the former president's allies in Congress and his 2024 GOP presidential rivals are eager to join that fight as his own legal challenges mount.

Trump's chief opponent, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, this week said the House Republicans "are absolutely within their rights" to consider an impeachment inquiry against Biden. Former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley, also running for president, said Republicans would be "justified to do it." And House GOP leaders aligned with Trump are foreshadowing what's ahead.

"House Republicans will leave no stone unturned," said Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, the fourth-ranking House GOP leader and a top Trump ally, who is sometimes mentioned as a potential vice presidential pick.

This week, the prospect of impeaching Biden over the business dealings of his son, Hunter Biden, emerged from the far corners of the GOP's right flank to the mainstream in the Republican Party.

Speaker Kevin McCarthy announced on Fox News that the House may open an impeachment inquiry into Biden, and expanded on his plans at a Tuesday press event at the Capitol.

Behind closed doors Wednesday, however, the Republican speaker told GOP colleagues it's early in the impeachment process, and McCarthy acknowledged there's still much that is unknown about Joe Biden and whether he had any awareness or involvement in his son's business deals that would arise to an impeachable offense.

"The speaker went through what we know and what we don't know," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., a seasoned lawmaker and committee chairman.

"There's a lot we don't know — we don't know if any money went directly to President Biden or not," Cole said, explaining the message to the House GOP. "That's what they do the investigations about."

ACROSS THE NATION

McConnell briefly leaves news conference after freezing up midsentence

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell briefly left his own press conference Wednesday after stopping his remarks midsentence and staring off into space for several seconds. McConnell approached the podium for his weekly press conference and began speaking about the annual defense bill on the floor, which he said was proceeding with "good bipartisan cooperation." But he then appeared to lose his train of thought, trailing off with a drawn-out "uh." The Kentucky senator then appeared to freeze up and stared vacantly for around 20 seconds before his colleagues in Republican leadership, who were standing behind him and could not see his face, grabbed his elbows and asked if he wanted to go back to his office. He did not answer, but slowly walked back to his office with an aide and Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, a former orthopedic surgeon who is the No. 3 Republican in the Senate. After sitting down in his office for several minutes, McConnell later returned to the press conference and answered questions from the press.

Trump now one of Jan. 6 rioters biggest supporters

NEW YORK (AP)—The day after Jan. 6, 2021, then-President Donald Trump denounced the rioters who violently stormed the Capitol building, breaking through barricades, battling law enforcement and sending members of Congress—who were set to formally certify his reelection loss—running for their lives. "Like all Americans, I am outraged by the violence, lawlessness and mayhem," he said in a video, condemning what he called a "heinous attack." That condemnation was delayed and only offered amid widespread criticism—including from fellow Republicans—for his role in sparking the mayhem. But 2 1/2 years later, any sign of regret or reprimand from Trump has vanished as he prepares to face federal criminal charges for his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Now the early but commanding frontrunner in the 2024 Republican presidential primary, Trump regularly downplays the violence, lionizes the rioters as patriots and spreads false claims about who was involved. He has not only vowed to pardon a "large portion" of Jan. 6 defendants if he wins a second term, but he has also fundraised for them, befriended their families and collaborated on a song that became a surprise iTunes hit.

Pedestrians scatter as fire causes NY construction crane to collapse

NEW YORK (AP)—A towering construction crane caught fire high above the West Side of Manhattan on Wednesday morning, causing its long arm to snap off, smash against a nearby building and plummet to the street as people ran for their lives on the sidewalk below. Several people suffered minor injuries in the collapse, but no one died, New York City Mayor Eric Adams said. "As you can see from the debris on the street, this could have been much worse," the Democrat said at a news conference, noting that the street at that hour of the morning is often filled with pedestrians, cars and buses. The crane was operating 45 stories up when its engine compartment caught fire at around 7:25 a.m., authorities said. Photos and videos on social media show flames bursting from the crane hundreds of feet above 10th Avenue at 41st Street. The crane's arm, which was carrying a 16-ton load of concrete, dangled before breaking off.

"That weight of 16 tons is attached by a cable," said Joseph Pfeifer, first deputy commissioner for the Fire Department of New York. "As the fire heats the cable, the cable weakens to a point where it loses its strength, and that's where the collapse occurred."

Asia

Kim Jong Un and Russian defense minister talk military cooperation

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu to discuss military issues and the regional security environment, state media said Thursday as the country celebrated the 70th anniversary of an armistice that halted fighting in the 1950-53 Korean War.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim and Shoigu talked Wednesday in the capital, Pyongyang, and reached a consensus on unspecified "matters of mutual concern in the field of national defense and security and on the regional and international security environment."

During the meeting, Shoigu conveyed to Kim a "warm and good letter" signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, KCNA said. The report did not specify the military matters that were discussed.

In a rare case of diplomatic opening since the start of the pandemic, North Korea invited delegations from Russia and China to attend the events marking the armistice of July 27, 1953. While the truce left the Korean Peninsula in a technical state of war, the North still sees it as a victory in the "Grand Fatherland Liberation War."

KCNA said Kim also took Shoigu to an arms exhibition that showcased some of North Korea's newest weapons and briefed him on national plans to expand the country's military capabilities. Photos from the exhibition showed Kim and Shoigu walking near a row of large missiles mounted on launcher trucks.

Some of the weapons in the images appeared to be intercontinental ballistic missiles that the North has flight-tested in recent years as it pursues an arsenal that can pose a viable threat to the continental United States. Kim and Shoigu also walked past what were possibly new surveillance and attack drones that had not been publicly announced by the North.

Lee Sung Joon, a spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that the South Korean military was analyzing the military assets shown in the North Korean photos but did not share specific assessments.

North Korea has been aligning with Russia over the war in Ukraine, insisting that the "hegemonic policy" of the U.S.-led West forced Moscow to take military action to protect its security interests. The Biden administration has accused North Korea of providing arms to Russia to aid its fighting in Ukraine, although the North has denied the claim.

When asked about the possibility that Shoigu's visit was to discuss importing weapons from North Korea, John Kirby, the White House's National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, didn't answer directly but said it was clear Putin is reaching out to other countries for support in fighting his war in Ukraine.

"Mr. Putin knows he's having his own defense procurement problems, his own inventory problems, that his military remains on the back foot, and he's trying to shore that up," Kirby said.

The North Korean festivities were widely expected to be capped later Thursday by a giant military parade in Pyongyang, where Kim could showcase his most powerful, nuclear-capable missiles. State media, however, had not confirmed plans for a military parade.

Some experts say North Korea sees U.S. confrontations with China and Russia over regional influence and the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to break out of diplomatic isolation and insert itself into a united front against Washington. Both Moscow and Beijing have been derailing U.S. efforts to strengthen U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea over its flurry of missile tests since 2022.

The last time North Korea invited foreign government delegates for a military parade was in February 2018, when it held a low-key event that excluded Kim's ICBMs. North Korea at the time was initiating diplomacy with Seoul and Washington as Kim attempted to leverage his nukes for badly needed economic benefits.

Those efforts led to a summit between Kim and then-U.S. President Donald Trump that June, but the diplomacy collapsed after their second meeting in February 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korean demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of their nuclear capabilities.

Japan records steepest population decline

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's population declined in all of its 47 prefectures for the first time in a record drop, while its number of foreign residents hit a new high, reaching almost 3 million people, according to government data released Wednesday, highlighting the increasing role that non-Japanese people play in the shrinking and aging country.

The population of Japanese nationals fell by about 800,000 people, or 0.65%, to 122.4 million in 2022 from the previous year, falling for a 14th straight year, according to data from the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry based on residency registrations as of Jan. 1 this year.

Japan's total population was 125.41 million, down just over half a million people from a year earlier, and there was a 10.7% jump in foreign residents with addresses registered in Japan, the ministry said.

The increase in Japan's foreign population was the biggest year-on-year rise since the ministry started taking statistics in 2013. Foreign residents now account for about 2.4% of Japan's population, the ministry said.

After peaking in 2008, Japan's population has since shrunk steadily due to a declining birthrate. The country saw a record low of 771,801 births last year.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has set tackling the declining births as one of his top policy goals and pledged to secure annual funding of about 3.5 trillion yen ($25.2 billion) over the next three years for a new child care package, which includes child birth and rearing allowances and increased subsidies for higher education.

Kishida's Cabinet last month approved a plan to expand the scope of job categories allowed for foreign workers, opening the door for future permanent residency, in a major shift in a country known for its closed-door immigration policy as it struggles with a shrinking population.

Experts say the proposed low-birth measures are mostly additional funding for existing ones and don't address underlying problems.

They also say that Japan's conservative government needs to do more to raise salaries, improve working conditions and make society more inclusive for minorities and those with non-Japanese roots to attract foreign workers to move to Japan and stay.

World

Israeli army fire kills a 14-year-old

AP

Tourists take cover from the mid-day heat at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City, Wednesday, July 26, 2023.

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli military fire killed a 14-year-old Palestinian in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian health officials said Thursday, as an extremist Israeli Cabinet minister visited a sensitive Jerusalem mosque that has been a frequent flashpoint for violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

Itamar Ben-Gvir's visit to the disputed hilltop compound comes as Israel and the Palestinians are locked in a year-and-a-half long bout of fighting and could enflame already surging tensions. It was also likely to draw condemnation from Palestinians who view such visits as provocative. The site is revered by Jews and Muslims, and the competing claims lie at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Early Thursday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said 14-year-old Fares Sharhabil Abu Samra was killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank town of Qalqilya. The Israeli military said Palestinians threw rocks and firebombs at troops, who responded by firing into the air. It said the incident was being reviewed.

» As Israeli minister visits flashpoint mosque

Ben-Gvir was joining what will likely to be hundreds of Jews visiting the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound to mark the Jewish holiday of Tisha B'Av, a day of mourning and repentance when Jews reflect on the destruction of the First and Second Temples, key events in Jewish history.

"This is the most important place for the people of Israel which we must return to and show our rule," Ben-Gvir said in a video released by his office, with the golden Dome of the Rock in the background.

Ben-Gvir, a former West Bank settler leader and far-right activist who years ago was convicted of incitement and supporting a Jewish terror group, now serves as Israel's national security minister, overseeing the country's police force.

Thursday was Ben-Gvir's third known visit to the contested site since becoming a minister in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government. The site, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, is the holiest site in Judaism, where the biblical Temples once stood. Today, it is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.

His visit could enflame already surging tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, who have been engaged in a monthslong round of fighting that has sparked the worst violence in nearly two decades in the West Bank.

NATO will step up security in Black Sea region

NATO said Wednesday it was stepping up surveillance of the Black Sea region as it condemned Russia's exit from a landmark deal that allowed Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea.

The announcement came after a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council, which was launched at a NATO summit in Lithuania earlier this month to coordinate cooperation between the military alliance and Kyiv.

The Kremlin doubled down on terminating the grain deal by attacking Ukrainian ports and declaring wide areas of the Black Sea unsafe for shipping.

"Allies and Ukraine strongly condemned Russia's decision to withdraw from the Black Sea grain deal and its deliberate attempts to stop Ukraine's agricultural exports on which hundreds of millions of people worldwide depend. ... NATO and allies are stepping up surveillance and reconnaissance in the Black Sea region, including with maritime patrol aircraft and drones," read the NATO statement.

Last week, Russia halted the breakthrough wartime deal that allowed grain to flow from Ukraine to countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where hunger is a growing threat and high food prices have pushed more people into poverty.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the Black Sea Grain Initiative would be suspended until demands to get Russian food and fertilizer to the world are met.

The NATO statement criticized Moscow's declaration that parts of the Black Sea's international waters were "temporarily unsafe" for navigation.

"Allies noted that Russia's new warning area in the Black Sea, within Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone, has created new risks for miscalculation and escalation, as well as serious impediments to freedom of navigation," the NATO statement said.

The suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative marks the end of an accord that the U.N. and Turkey brokered last summer to allow shipments of food from the Black Sea region after Russia's invasion of its neighbor worsened a global food crisis. The initiative is credited with helping reduce soaring prices of wheat, vegetable oil and other global food commodities.

Ukraine and Russia are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food that developing nations rely on. ***(AP)***

Off The Wall

Search for missing Texas rodeo goat unites residents of small rural county

RAYMONDVILLE, Texas (AP)—First there was Gone Girl. Now there is Gone Goat.

The search for a rodeo goat that has been missing for more than a week has the residents of a rural South Texas county enthralled as they are using horses, ATVs and even contemplating utilizing a helicopter to find the missing animal.

Local businesses have donated nearly 90 prizes and gifts worth more than $5,000, including brisket, frescoes and salon service, as a reward for the person who finds the goat.

"This has just gotten bigger than we ever dreamed. Our county is a really small county, about 20,000 population and a mostly agriculture, farming and ranching community. And we're very much one big family ... So, we're excited that everybody wants to find our goat," said Alison Savage, president of the Willacy County Livestock Show and Fair.

Residents, including families, have been scouring cotton and sugar cane fields since the goat escaped from a pen in the county's rodeo arena near Raymondville on July 15 following a youth rodeo. On Sunday, possible goat tracks were spotted in a cotton field near Lyford, south of Raymondville.

AP

This photo provided by the Willacy County Livestock Show and Fair shows a rodeo goat named Willy, who went missing on July 15, 2023, in a rural South Texas county.

When the goat first went missing, it didn't have a name. But after a poll on the livestock show's Facebook page, the goat was named Willy, short for Willacy County, Savage said. While the goat has a name, Savage said officials are not sure if Willy is a boy or a girl.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Iowa man's collection of 70,000 pencils being evaluated as possible world record

COLFAX, Iowa (AP)—An Iowa man may be well on his way to an official world record—for pencils. Aaron Bartholmey of Colfax has been collecting wooden advertising pencils since he was a child. Now, he claims to own more than 70,000. That's substantially more than the Guinness World Record for the largest pencil collection—24,000, held by Emilio Arenas from Uruguay since 2020. Bartholmey told KCCI-TV that his most treasured pencils are those from his hometown, noting that in many instances the pencils "are the only place where there is any record of that business still, and I think it's just a neat way to preserve history." Last weekend, two counters from the American Pencil Collectors Society were at the Colfax Historical Society to count Bartholmey's pencils. Now, he's waiting to hear if the count is approved by Guinness, which estimated the review process could take up to three months.

Beetlejuice II filming set in Vermont is haunted by souvenir seekers

EAST CORINTH, Vt. (AP)—Souvenir hunters are haunting the Beetlejuice II movie set in Vermont. State police are investigating two thefts, one of a large lamppost topped with a distinctive pumpkin decoration and the other a 150-pound abstract art piece taken from the vicinity of a cemetery. Someone bundled up the lamppost, covered it with tarp and fled at a high rate of speed in a pickup truck on July 14, while the theft near the cemetery took place several days later, state police said Thursday. The sequel to the 1988 movie is filming in East Corinth, near the New Hampshire border. The original Tim Burton horror comedy about a home haunted by ghosts played by Geena Davis and Alec Baldwin, and also starring Winona Ryder, also was filmed in East Corinth. For the new movie, Michael Keaton is reprising his role as the "bio-exorcist" Beetlejuice. The sequel also features "Wednesday" star Jenna Ortega and others. The movie is due to be released next year.

Say goodbye to Bodypainting Day in NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—If you've ever dreamed of standing naked in New York City with dozens of strangers while artists turn your skin into a work of art, you may have missed your chance. Sunday's Bodypainting Day will be the final edition after more than a decade of artists turning nude bodies into works of art. Organizer Andy Golub expects more than 50 people will be painted over four hours in Manhattan's Union Square. Golub decided this year's event would be the last because it's time to "move on and clear that plate." He said he wants to find different ways of empowering and bringing people together, including a new event next spring. After Sunday's body painting is finished, the participating artists and models will march through Greenwich Village, pose for a photo in Washington Square Park, ride a double-decker bus over the Manhattan Bridge and end the day with a party in Brooklyn, Golub said. Golub, an artist and free speech activist who's been painting on nude models since 2007, started the annual body painting extravaganza to underscore that nudity for artistic purposes is legal in New York City. That hasn't stopped police from trying to halt the event. In 2011, Golub said, he and two models were arrested and detained for 24 hours, but the charges were dropped once authorities determined they were doing nothing illegal.

Science & Technology

Ocean currents key for distributing heat could collapse by midcentury

BY DREW COSTLEY
AP SCIENCE WRITER

A system of ocean currents that transports heat northward across the North Atlantic could collapse by midcentury, according to a new study, and scientists have said before that such a collapse could cause catastrophic sea-level rise and extreme weather across the globe.

In recent decades, researchers have both raised and downplayed the specter of Atlantic current collapse. It even prompted a movie that strayed far from the science. Two years ago the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said any such catastrophe is unlikely this century. But the new study published in Nature Communications suggests it might not be as far away and unlikely as mainstream science says.

The Atlantic meridional overturning circulation is a vital system of ocean currents that circulates water throughout the Atlantic Ocean, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It's a lengthy process, taking an estimated 1,000 years to complete, but has slowed even more since the mid-1900s.

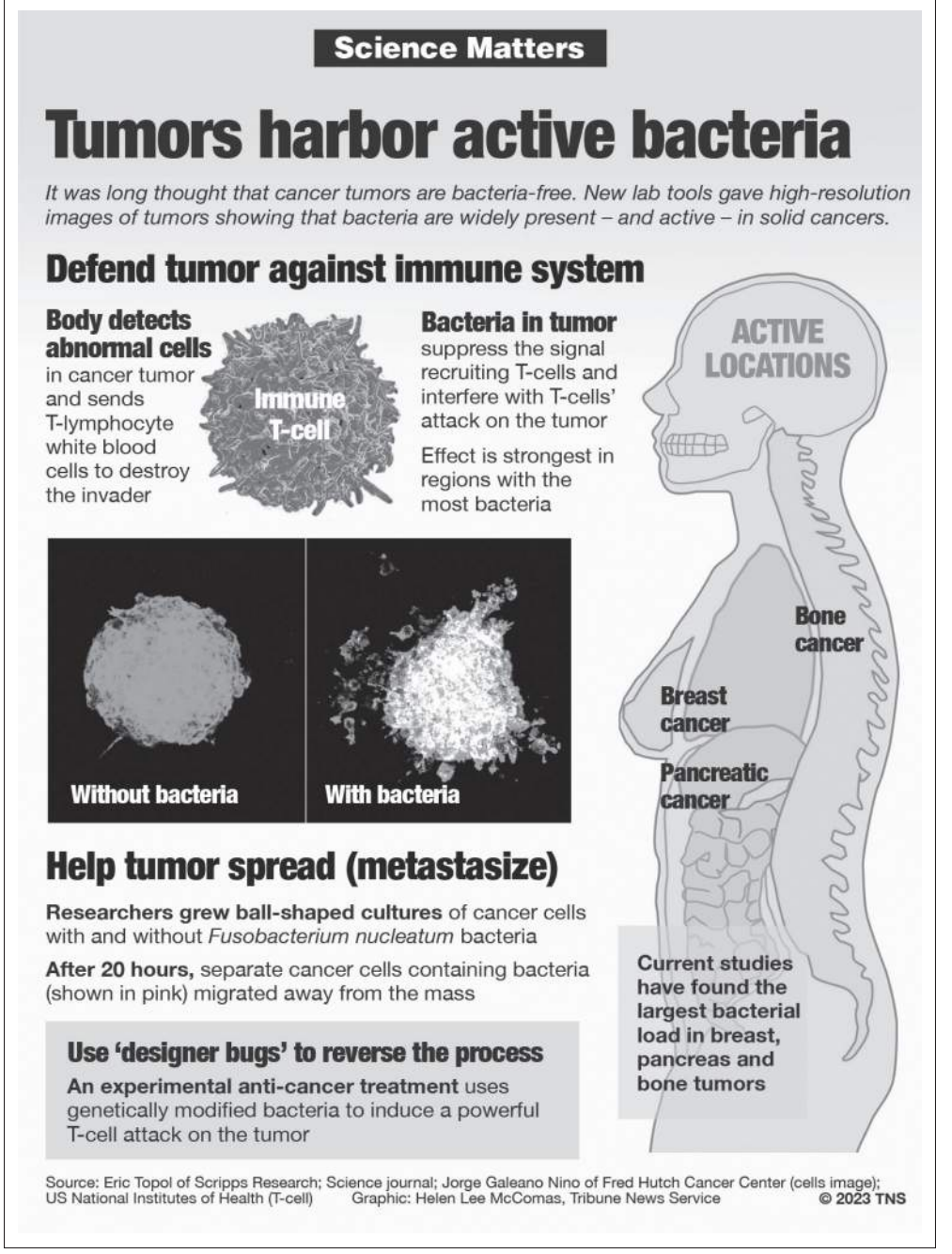
A further slowdown or complete halting of the circulation could create more extreme weather in the Northern Hemisphere, sea-level rise on the East Coast of the United States and drought for millions in southern Africa, scientists in Germany and the U.S. have said. But the timing is uncertain.

In the new study, Peter and Susanne Ditlevsen, two researchers from Denmark, analyzed sea surface temperatures in the North Atlantic between 1870 and 2020 as a proxy, meaning a way of assessing, this circulation. They found the system could collapse as soon as 2025 and as late as 2095, given current global greenhouse gas emissions. This diverges from the prediction made by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change in 2021, which said the collapse isn't likely to occur this century.

"There are large uncertainties in this study, in many prior studies, and in climate impact assessment overall, and scientists sometimes miss important aspects that can lead to both over and underprediction of impacts," Julio Friedmann, chief scientist at Carbon Direct, a carbon management company, said in a statement. "Still, the conclusion is obvious: Action must be swift and profound to counter major climate risks."

Stefan Rahmstorf, co-author on a 2018 study on the subject, published an extensive analysis of the Ditlevesen's study on RealClimate, a website that publishes commentary from climate scientists. While he said that a tipping point for the collapse of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation is "highly uncertain," he also called the IPCC estimate conservative.

"Increasingly the evidence points to the risk being far greater than 10% during this century," he wrote, "...rather worrying for the next few decades."


Science Matters
Tumors harbor active bacteria
It was long thought that cancer tumors are bacteria-free. New lab tools gave high-resolution images of tumors showing that bacteria are widely present – and active – in solid cancers.
Defend tumor against immune system
Body detects abnormal cells in cancer tumor and sends T-lymphocyte white blood cells to destroy the invader
Immune T-cell
Bacteria in tumor suppress the signal recruiting T-cells and interfere with T-cells' attack on the tumor
Effect is strongest in regions with the most bacteria
Without bacteria
With bacteria
Help tumor spread (metastasize)
Researchers grew ball-shaped cultures of cancer cells with and without Fusobacterium nucleatum bacteria
After 20 hours, separate cancer cells containing bacteria (shown in pink) migrated away from the mass
Use 'designer bugs' to reverse the process
An experimental anti-cancer treatment uses genetically modified bacteria to induce a powerful T-cell attack on the tumor
ACTIVE LOCATIONS
Bone cancer
Breast cancer
Pancreatic cancer
Current studies have found the largest bacterial load in breast, pancreas and bone tumors
Source: Eric Topol of Scripps Research; Science journal; Jorge Galeano Nino of Fred Hutch Cancer Center (cells image); US National Institutes of Health (T-cell)
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service
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Life & Style

Sinéad O'Connor, provocative Irish singer-songwriter, dies at 56

LONDON (AP)—Sinéad O'Connor, the gifted Irish singer-songwriter who became a superstar in her mid-20s and was known as much for her private struggles and provocative actions as for her fierce and expressive music, has died at 56.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved Sinéad. Her family and friends are devastated and have requested privacy at this very difficult time," the singer's family said in a statement reported Wednesday by the BBC and RTE. No cause was disclosed.

She was public about her mental illness, saying that she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. O'Connor posted a Facebook video in 2017 from a New Jersey motel where she had been living, saying that she was staying alive for the sake of others and that if it were up to her, she'd be "gone."

When her teenage son Shane died by suicide last year, O'Connor tweeted there was "no point living without him" and she was soon hospitalized. Her final tweet, sent July 17, read: "For all mothers of Suicided children," and linked to a Tibetan compassion mantra.

Recognizable by her shaved head and with a multi-octave mezzo soprano of extraordinary emotional range, O'Connor began her career singing on the streets of Dublin and soon rose to international fame.

O'Connor

She was a star from her 1987 debut album, "The Lion and the Cobra," and became a sensation in 1990 with her cover of Prince's ballad "Nothing Compares 2 U," a seething, shattering performance that topped charts from Europe to Australia and was heightened by a promotional video featuring the gray-eyed O'Connor in intense close-up.

She was a lifelong non-conformist—she said she shaved her head in response to record executives pressuring her to be conventionally glamorous—but her political and cultural stances and troubled private life often overshadowed her music.

A critic of the Roman Catholic Church well before allegations of sexual abuse were widely reported, O'Connor made headlines in October 1992 when she tore up a photo of Pope John Paul II while appearing on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" and denounced the church as the enemy.

The next week, Joe Pesci hosted "Saturday Night Live," held up a repaired photo of the Pope and said if he had been on the show with O'Connor he "would have gave her such a smack." Days later, she appeared at an all-star tribute for Bob Dylan at Madison Square Garden and was immediately booed. She was supposed to sing Dylan's "I Believe in You," but switched to an a cappella version of Bob Marley's "War," which she had sung on "Saturday Night Live."

Although consoled and encouraged on stage by her friend Kris Kristofferson, she left and broke down, and her performance was kept off the concert CD. (Years later, Kristofferson recorded "Sister Sinead," for which he wrote, "And maybe she's crazy and maybe she ain't/But so was Picasso and so were the saints.")

She also feuded with Frank Sinatra over her refusal to allow the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at one of her shows and accused Prince of physically threatening her. In 1989 she declared her support for the Irish Republican Army, a statement she retracted a year later. Around the same time, she skipped the Grammy ceremony, saying it was too commercialized.

In 1999, O'Connor caused uproar in Ireland when she became a priestess of the breakaway Latin Tridentine Church—a position that was not recognized by the mainstream Catholic Church. For many years, she called for a full investigation into the extent of the church's role in concealing child abuse by clergy. In 2010, when Pope Benedict XVI apologized to Ireland to atone for decades of abuse, O'Connor condemned the apology for not going far enough and called for Catholics to boycott Mass until there was a full investigation into the Vatican's role.

"People assumed I didn't believe in God. That's not the case at all. I'm Catholic by birth and culture and would be the first at the church door if the Vatican offered sincere reconciliation," she wrote in the Washington Post in 2010.

O'Connor announced in 2018 that she had converted to Islam and would be adopting the name Shuhada' Davitt, later Shuhada Sadaqat—although she continued to use Sinéad O'Connor professionally.

"Her music was loved around the world and her talent was unmatched and beyond compare," Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said in a statement on social media.

O'Connor was born on Dec. 8, 1966. She had a difficult childhood, with a mother she alleged was abusive and encouraged her to shoplift. As a teenager she spent time in a church-sponsored institution for girls, where she said she washed priests' clothes for no wages. But a nun gave O'Connor her first guitar, and soon she sang and performed on the streets of Dublin, her influences ranging from Dylan to Siouxsie and the Banshees.

UK jury acquits Kevin Spacey of sexual assault charges

LONDON (AP)—A jury in London acquitted Kevin Spacey of sexual assault Wednesday after the Oscar winner's star turn as a witness in his own defense spared him a possible prison term and offered him hope of a career comeback after six years without a job.

Tears rolled down Spacey's cheeks as the final "not guilty" verdict was read. The Oscar winner looked at the jury, placed his hand over the lapel of his blue suit and pink shirt, and mouthed "thank you." It was his 64th birthday.

"I imagine that many of you can understand that there's a lot for me to process after what has just happened today," a humbled Spacey said outside Southwark Crown Court after thanking a handful of jurors in the lobby. "I am enormously grateful to the jury for having taken the time to examine all of the evidence and all of the facts carefully before they reached their decision."

Spacey's two days of testimony culminated with him choking up as he spoke of his six years without work since the sex abuse allegations against him surfaced in 2017.

Spacey

"My world exploded," Spacey testified. "There was a rush to judgment and before the first question was asked or answered, I lost my job, I lost my reputation, I lost everything in a matter of days."

Three men accused Spacey of aggressively grabbing their crotches, describing him as "vile" and a "slippery, snaky" predator. A fourth, an aspiring actor, said he awoke to the actor performing oral sex on him after falling asleep or passing out in Spacey's London apartment where he had gone for career advice and a beer.

Spacey said he was a "big flirt" who had consensual flings with men and whose only misstep was touching a man's groin while making a "clumsy pass."

Defense lawyer Patrick Gibbs said three of the men were liars and that their encounters had been "reimagined with a sinister spin." He accused them of hopping on a #MeToo "bandwagon" in the hope of striking it rich. Two of the men have sued Spacey.

Prosecutor Christine Agnew called Spacey a "sexual bully" who preyed on younger men. She said he was shielded by a "trinity of protection"—he knew men were unlikely to complain; they wouldn't be believed if they did complain; and if they did complain, no action would be taken because he was powerful.

Spacey had faced nine charges, including multiple counts of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent. Jurors deliberated for 12.5 hours over three days before reaching their verdict.

Spacey had viewed the London case as a chance for redemption, telling German magazine Zeit last month that there were "people right now who are ready to hire me the moment I am cleared of these charges in London."

Middle-aged daughter takes no responsibility in life

DEAR ABBY: My 40-year-old daughter has never grown up. Until recently, she relied on her grandmother to make ends meet. Her grandmother passed away, and now I'm all she has. After she was fired from her civil-service job and evicted from her apartment, she broke her leg in a hiking accident. I got her into an apartment and have been supporting her for a few months now.

Once her leg has healed, she has an entry-level job to return to, however long that lasts. I don't think it pays enough for her to live on. I offered to pay for training in ANYTHING she's interested in, but she shows no interest in a part-time job to help with bills. I can't believe what she tells me because she never learned responsibility, accountability or honesty.

She has now quit texting me because I called her out on her continual excuses, lies and half-truths. I'm committed to paying her rent until her leg is fully healed, but then what? Do I let her go to the street in hopes she'll learn responsibility? I know what can, and probably will, happen. To say she's ill-prepared is an understatement.

FED-UP DAD IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR DAD: Until your daughter learns there are consequences for her irresponsibility, lack of accountability and lying, she will become increasingly dependent on your generosity. That she no longer answers your texts may be a plus.

Continue the arrangement you have with her until her leg has healed and then, finally, let her live with the consequences. It's the only way she is going to learn. The alternative is to keep supporting her as if she were a child for the rest of your life.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I'm an attractive, fit and emotionally intelligent 43-year-old woman who has been divorced for almost eight years. I have dated during that time, and even had a five-year relationship with someone I thought would be my future spouse, but who turned out to be a waste of time. I ended the relationship three months ago, and I'm ready to date again.

My problem is I have an aversion to online dating. Most of my relationships have been with men I've met via other means, but I feel I may need to use this tool to meet people since I'm so busy with work and being a single mother of two (ages 15 and 11). Joining a group or a club can be difficult, and I don't have many friends who can fix me up. How can I make this process more enjoyable?

LOOKING FOR LOVE IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR LOOKING: Online dating is enjoyable for some people and abhorrent to others. If the dating pool in your city has shrunk, you may have little choice other than to sign up for some dating apps. Talk to some of your friends and relatives and ask for some pointers. More than a few successful matches have been made online, but understand that it is a sifting process, and you have to be prepared to cope with disappointment if what you want doesn't happen right away. Keep at it, don't personalize it ("if at first you don't succeed ...") and recognize that every failure heightens the odds of success down the line.

■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

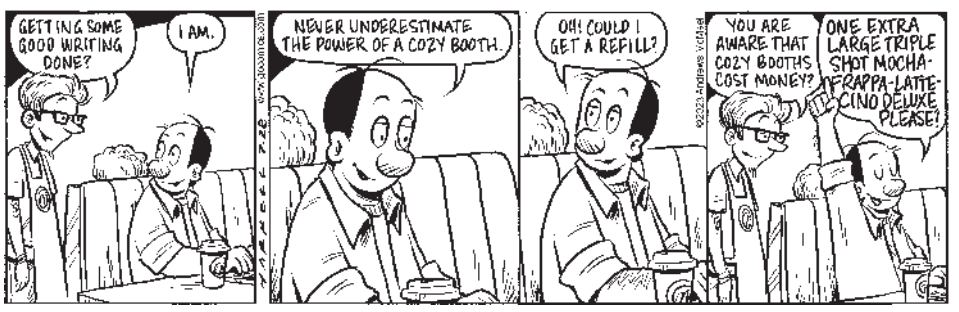
By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

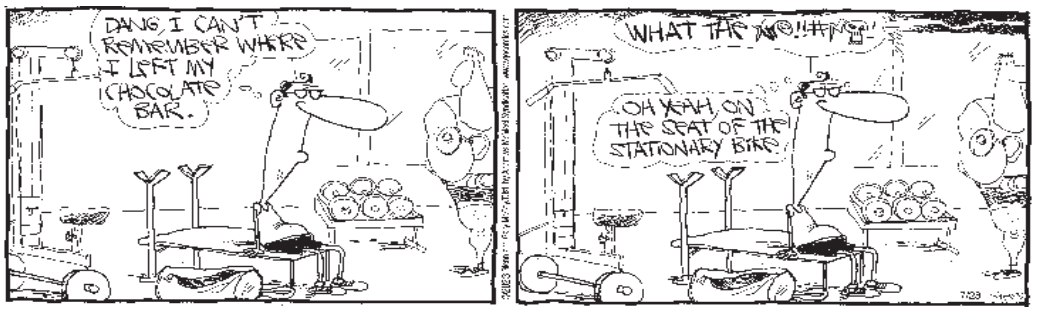
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


GETTING SOME GOOD WRITING DONE?
I AM.
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A COZY BOOTH.
OH! COULD I GET A REFILL?
YOU ARE AWARE THAT COZY BOOTHS COST MONEY?
ONE EXTRA LARGE TRIPLE SHOT MOCHA-FRAPPA-LATTE-CINO DELUXE PLEASE!
7-28

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

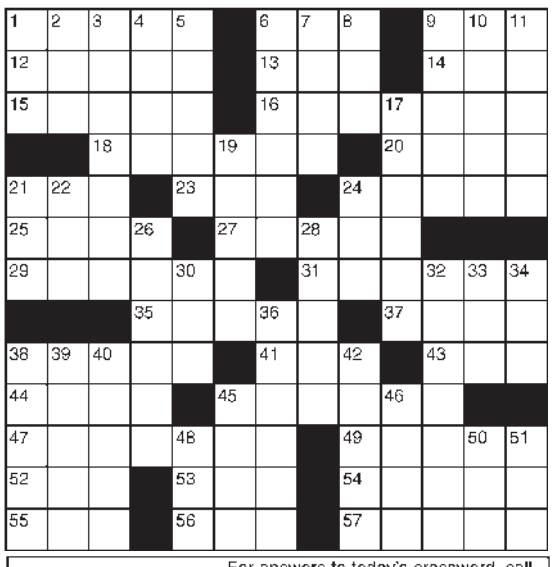
ACROSS
1 Wintour and Karenina
6 Rockies hrs.
9 iPhone download
12 Gaggle members
13 "Am — blame?"
14 Distant
15 Beach accessory
16 Recent recruit
18 Famed pollster
20 God of war
21 U.K. recording label
23 Lush
24 Kilmer poem
25 Biting remark
27 Kingdom
29 Caviar provider
31 Serving as a symbol
35 Estate house
37 Jules Verne captain
38 Sobs
41 British ref. work
43 Romance
44 Fashion magazine
45 Strange thing
47 FDR program
49 Blue Ivy, to Solange
52 "CSI" evidence
53 Dad on "Black-ish"
54 Bike compo-nents
55 "Rah!"
56 Aircraft carrier letters
57 Flynn of film

DOWN
1 Literary rep
2 Ultra-modernist
3 Zooey Des-chanel sitcom
4 On the Baltic, say
5 Vends
6 Teeny
7 Dance move
8 Highway rescue
9 Blazing
10 French city, in song
11 Garlic-crushing gadget
17 "NCIS" star Mark
19 Naviga-tional system
21 Recede
22 Astro-naut Jemison
24 Patient's need, briefly
26 Jostled
28 Broad-cast
30 Petrol
32 Annual celebra-tion
33 Texter's "I think"
34 Bill's partner
36 A whole lot
38 "Peter Pan" heroine
39 Justice Kagan
40 Famed Broncos quarter-back
42 Grimi-ness
45 Rowboat needs
46 Cake layer
48 College URL ender
50 — -Magnon
51 Night school subj.

Solution time: 25 mins.

P	I	A	Y		S	O	R		R	S	V	P
R	O	K	U		C	A	R		E	C	O	L
E	R	I	C		O	R	A		N	O	N	E
P	I	N	C	E	R		G	R	O	U	N	D
			A	L	S			A	I	T		
B	O	S	S		E	N	S	I	R	I	N	E
A	R	C			S	E	C			N	A	M
T	O	O	D	L	E	O	O		A	G	E	S
			W	E	B			T	R	I		
T	A	L	L	O	W		T	E	R	R	O	R
A	L	I	T		A	R	I		B	O	L	O
I	I	N	A		N	E	E		A	L	D	A
S	A	G	S		D	O	S		G	L	E	N

Yesterday's answer 7-28



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dustin Milligan, 38; Sally Struthers, 76; Jim Davis, 78; Peter Cullen, 82.

Happy Birthday: Discipline is a prerequisite to achieving what you set out to do this year, so take your time and do things right the first time. Refuse to let outside interference shred your confidence or allow others to take advantage of you. Trust in your intelligence and know what's best for you; your year will unfold just how you want. Trust and believe in yourself. Your numbers are 5, 19, 24, 28, 31, 39, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Plan something entertaining or physically challenging and give it your all. Get in the groove and mastermind what brings you closer to your happy place. Make decisions based on your needs, not what someone pressures you to pursue. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Choose personal growth over changing others. Consistency will win over those who have yet to decide. Let your actions speak for you; the results will be your calling card. Unnecessary change is not in your best interest. Maintain or ration rather than accumulate. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't get upset. Someone will try to supersede you, but staying composed and using intelligent tactics will be the best way to ensure you maintain your integrity and position. Be the calm in the storm. Romance and self-improvement are favored. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take the initiative, be resourceful and map out a plan before you begin your next endeavor. Preparation will put your mind at ease and make whatever you do more enjoyable. Surround yourself with responsible and resourceful people, and enjoy what life offers. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Be free-spirited on a budget. Don't give in to temptation. Use your imagination to devise a plan to give you the boost you need and the ingenuity to follow through with your goals. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Don't act hastily. Time is on your side, and opportunity is heading your way. Embrace changes that make you feel secure and confident that you can take care of your responsibilities and do what makes you happy. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Ask an expert, and you'll find a way to conquer anything that stands in your way. Monitor spending and scour over every detail before you agree to make a move. Stay on top of medical issues that can affect your productivity or performance. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll need leverage to reach your goal. Observe what others do and say, and raise issues that can give you the edge when trying to get your way. Don't fear doing things differently or being controversial when dealing with joint endeavors. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* A demonstrative approach to life will draw positive attention and offer you the platform you require to present your plans. The input you receive will help you decide what's feasible. An investment will offer greater financial mobility and personal growth, and romance looks promising. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Tidy up loose ends and prepare to make your life easier. Set your sights on what you want, and do whatever it takes to reach your destination. Align yourself with unique individuals with insight into future trends and long-term investments. Proceed with confidence. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Put more energy into going above the call of duty. Separate yourself from those competing with you. Set high standards and bypass anyone who isn't on board; if you snooze, you lose. Make your mark, and don't look back. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Dedication, loyalty and intelligence will lead to opportunity and positive change. Keep your eye on the ball and your feet on the ground; the result will be where you want to hang your hat. Focus on what you want, and seize the moment. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are excitable, proactive and changeable. You are focused and assertive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	6	9	1			8		
5	7	3				9		
						6		7
				7	2			4
		6					8	
7	8		3					
8			9		1			6
		7		3		1		
1					6			2

Difficulty: ★★★★ 7/28

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	8	9	3	4	7	2	6	1
2	6	3	5	8	1	9	7	4
4	1	7	6	2	9	3	5	8
3	5	4	1	9	6	8	2	7
1	7	6	2	3	8	5	4	9
9	2	8	4	7	5	1	3	6
8	9	5	7	6	3	4	1	2
6	4	1	9	5	2	7	8	3
7	3	2	8	1	4	6	9	5

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Difficulty: ★★★ 7/27

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ANGEL FALLS, VENEZUELA **Solution: 4 letters**

C	M	E	G	A	L	L	I	V	A	E	R	I	A	L
R	A	O	T	S	E	L	L	A	T	D	P	C	T	R
A	E	N	U	V	A	N	O	O	G	A	L	A	S	A
L	W	H	A	N	W	U	T	S	N	J	O	R	C	I
T	A	R	T	I	T	I	Y	O	E	B	(L)	R	A	N
I	T	C	K	A	M	A	R	A	T	A	(U)	A	N	F
T	E	M	I	M	E	A	I	S	N	D	(S)	O	Y	O
U	R	U	U	P	M	W	L	N	I	T	(H)	O	O	R
D	F	S	T	A	O	O	T	H	G	I	E	H	N	E
E	A	E	I	S	O	R	C	B	D	I	O	P	A	S
L	L	U	S	P	T	R	T	R	I	V	E	R	U	T
G	L	M	I	L	O	R	O	A	N	A	Y	U	G	I
N	S	E	V	A	W	P	A	Z	P	L	U	N	G	E
U	M	H	I	S	T	O	R	I	C	A	N	O	E	S
J	T	S	E	H	G	I	H	L	L	O	D	G	E	S

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Aerial, Altitude, Auyán-Tepui, Boat, Brazil, Canaima, Canoes, Canyon, Carrao, Drop, Guyana, Height, Highest, Historic, Jade, Jungle, Kamarata, Lagoon, Lodges, Lush, Mountain, Museum, Orchid, Panorama, Plunge, Pools, Rainforest, River, Sapo, Season, Splash, Summit, Tallest, Trail, Travel, Tropical, Village, Visit, Waterfall, Waves, Weather

Yesterday's Answer: Fitness

The NEW **TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Pirates hit 3 home runs to hold off Padres in 3-2 win

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Ji Man Choi, Bryan Reynolds and Carlos Santana hit home runs for the Pittsburgh Pirates, who held off the San Diego Padres 3-2 on Wednesday to win two of three games.

David Bednar loaded the bases with one out in the ninth inning and then walked pinch-hitter Juan Soto before getting rookie Taylor Kohlwey to foul out and then striking out Trent Grisham for his 20th save of the season.

The Padres, who have baseball's third-highest payroll but are mired in fourth place in the NL West, went 1-5 this season against Pittsburgh, which is in last place in the NL Central.

Right-hander Johan Oviedo (4-11) shook off three pitch clock violations and a wild pitch in the first inning to snap a streak of eight straight losing decisions. He held San Diego to one run and three hits in six innings to win for the first time since May 19 against Arizona.

Seth Lugo (4-5) tied his career high with eight strikeouts while allowing two runs and three hits in seven innings.

AP

Pittsburgh Pirates' Ji Man Choi (91) celebrates with teammate Endy Rodriguez after hitting a home run during the second inning of a baseball game against the San Diego Padres, Wednesday, July 26, 2023, in San Diego.

YANKEES 3, METS 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Carlos Rodón earned his first victory in four starts and the Yankees got an offensive spark from Harrison Bader in earning a split of the two-game Subway Series.

Bader had three hits and scored twice at Yankee Stadium, including an aggressive dash and headfirst dive into home plate. Rodón (1-3) outpitched fellow lefty José Quintana before four Yankees relievers combined to retire all 10 batters they faced.

Clay Holmes worked the ninth for his 14th save in 17 chances, giving the Yankees a four-game split of the season series with the Mets. The crosstown rivals also split two games last month at Citi Field.

Rodón allowed one run and four hits in 5 2/3 effective innings. He struck out four, walked three and received a warm hand from Yankees fans in the sellout crowd of 46,761 as he came off the mound.

Gleyber Torres' first-inning single extended his hitting streak to a career-high 15 games, longest by a Yankees player this season.

Quintana (0-2) was charged with three runs — two earned — and six hits over six innings in his second start for the Mets. The veteran left-hander missed the first 3 1/2 months of the season following rib surgery.

BREWERS 3, REDS 0

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Freddy Peralta pitched six strong innings and matched a career high with 13 strikeouts, and Tyrone Taylor hit a two-run homer to lead Milwaukee.

The Brewers (57-46) took two of three games in the series and extended their lead in the NL Central to 1 1/2 games over the Reds (56-48). This marked the final matchup of the season between the teams, with Milwaukee winning the season series 10-3.

After Abraham Toro singled with one out in the seventh off Cincinnati starter Ben Lively (4-6), Taylor followed with a 417-foot blast to left field to break a scoreless tie.

NATIONALS 5, ROCKIES 4

WASHINGTON (AP)—CJ Abrams' two-run single capped a four-run ninth inning and Washington rallied to beat Colorado.

Lane Thomas and Jeimer Candelario opened the ninth with walks against Daniel Bard (4-2). Joey Meneses, whose three-run homer was the difference in Tuesday night's win, singled to load the bases. One out later, Bard hit Dominic Smith with a pitch to walk in a run and make it 4-2.

Stone Garrett was out on a slow roller before Candelario scored Washington's third run. Luis Garcia was intentionally walked and Ildemaro Vargas drew a four-pitch walk to tie the score. Matt Koch came on to face Abrams, who grounded a single between first and second to score pinch runner Michael Chavis for the winning run.

MARINERS 8, TWINS 7

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Dylan Moore hit two home runs, including a three-run shot in the fifth inning, and Seattle held on to beat Minnesota.

Julio Rodríguez added a home run and two doubles as the Mariners won for the fifth time in their past seven games. The AL Central-leading Twins dropped their second in a row following a four-game winning streak.

Moore's three-run homer off reliever Jordan Balazovic in the fifth inning gave Seattle a 7-3 lead.

Seattle rookie right-hander Bryce Miller (7-3) struck out seven while yielding six earned runs on eight hits in 5 2/3 innings. Andrés Muñoz earned his second save after coaxing Max Kepler's game-ending ground-out with a runner at second.

Minnesota's Matt Wallner also homered twice for his first career multi-homer game.

RED SOX 5, BRAVES 3

BOSTON (AP)—Justin Turner hit a go-ahead, two-run double off the Green Monster in the seventh inning and Boston swept the two-game series against major league-leading Atlanta.

Rafael Devers, Tristan Casas and Adam Duvall homered for Boston, which trailed 3-0 after Ozzie Albies hit a three-run shot for Atlanta in the sixth.

Boston has won four straight and is a season-best eight games over .500 at 55-47. Atlanta is 64-36.

Joe Jacques (2-1) pitched the seventh for Boston, John Schreiber and Brennan Bernardino worked the eighth and All-Star closer Kenley Jansen finished for his 22nd save.

PHILLIES 6, ORIOLES 4

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Edmundo Sosa hit a tiebreaking solo homer to the opposite field with two outs in the seventh inning to help Philadelphia beat Baltimore.

J.T. Realmuto knocked in two runs while Bryce Harper added an insurance run with a seventh inning RBI single to allow the Phillies (55-47) to win the best of three series against their I-95 neighbors.

Adley Rutschman hit a three-run homer for the Orioles, who maintain a 1 1/2 game lead over Tampa Bay in the AL East after finishing 4-3 on their seven-game road trip.

Sosa caught a fastball from Kyle Bradish (6-6) and hit it into the stands inside the right field foul pole for his career-high seventh homer of the season. Bradish allowed five earned runs and seven hits in 6 2/3 innings.

GIANTS 8, ATHLETICS 3

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Pinch-hitter Austin Slater hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the sixth, Alex Wood earned the win with three scoreless innings of relief and San Francisco beat Oakland.

Wood (5-4) entered to start the fifth in a tie game and allowed just one hit making his fifth relief outing of 2023 to go with 11 starts.

Slater connected against Hogan Harris (2-5) after J.D. Davis hit a two-run homer in the first against A's opener Freddy Tarnok.

Shea Langeliers hit a tying single in the fourth for Oakland following Aledmys Diaz's RBI single and an errant throw by center fielder Luis Matos that allowed a second run to come home.

Patrick Bailey and Mike Yastrzemski added RBI doubles in the eighth as the Giants swept the quick two-game Bay Bridge Series after snapping a six-game losing streak with a 2-1 victory Tuesday night.

Highly touted Giants shortstop Marco Luciano made his major league debut and went 0 for 2 after spending just six games with Triple-A Sacramento.

CUBS 10, WHITE SOX 7

CHICAGO (AP)—Christopher Morel drove in two runs during a six-run fifth inning that featured only three hits, and the Cubs won their fifth straight and seventh in eight games.

Ian Happ and Cody Bellinger hit back-to-back homers in the eighth for the Cubs (50-51), who erased a five-run deficit. They also moved within 4 1/2 games of an NL wild card, continuing their bid to stay together through Tuesday's trade deadline.

After Marcus Stroman struggled again, four Cubs relievers combined for 5 2/3 innings of one-hit ball. Javier Assad (1-2) got five outs for the win, and Adbert Alzolay worked the ninth for his 11th save.

Eloy Jiménez had four RBIs and Jake Burger homered for the White Sox, who are 5-14 in July after dropping their fifth straight game.

GUARDIANS 8, ROYALS 3

CLEVELAND (AP)—José Ramírez hit a two-run homer in the first inning and a solo shot in the fourth, leading Cleveland past Kansas City.

Ramírez, who had his 22nd career multi-homer game, was 3 for 4 with a check-swing infield hit in the sixth and a walk in the second followed by a stolen base, and he scored three runs.

David Fry hit a two-run homer in the fourth and Steven Kwan had two RBIs. Cleveland moved to 51-51 and trails Minnesota by two games in the AL Central.

Cleveland starter Gavin Williams pitched four scoreless innings but was pulled after throwing 85 pitches. Nick Sandlin (5-3) allowed a run in the fifth and got the win.

Kansas City starter Alec Marsh (0-5) allowed four runs in 2 2/3 innings.

CARDINALS 11, DIAMONDBACKS 7

PHOENIX (AP)—Nolan Gorman hit two of St. Louis' five home runs in a win over Arizona.

Gorman connected leading off the second against All-Star starter Zac Gallen, then hit a two-run blast to dead center in the eighth off Scott McGough.

Lars Nootbaar, Paul Goldschmidt and Andrew Knizner also homered to give the Cardinals the series victory over the slumping Diamondbacks, who have lost six of seven and are 3-9 since the All-Star break.

MARLINS 7, RAYS 1

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Sandy Alcántara threw a five-hit complete game and Miami stopped a 10-game road losing streak.

Alcántara (4-9), the reigning NL Cy Young Award winner, struck out seven and walked one in his second complete game this season and 11th overall. He had been 0-3 in four July starts with one no decision.

Tampa Bay starter Zach Eflin (11-6), bidding to become the AL's first 12-game winner, left after four innings with left knee discomfort. The right-hander dropped to 10-2 in 12 home starts this season after allowing five runs and seven hits.

Eflin was hurt while attempting to field Garrett Hampson's bunt single leading off the fourth and will undergo tests.

BLUE JAYS 8, DODGERS 1

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Whit Merrifield hit a three-run homer, Danny Jansen also went deep and Toronto took two of three from NL West-leading Los Angeles.

Merrifield sent an 0-2 pitch from Tony Gonsolin (5-4) over the wall in left with two outs in the fifth inning, scoring Bo Bichette and Vladimir Guerrero Jr., who both singled. Merrifield was 2 for 4 with four RBIs, two runs scored and a strikeout.

Jansen led off the sixth, blasting a line-drive to left off reliever Alex Vesia for a 6-0 lead.

RANGERS 13, ASTROS 5

HOUSTON (AP)—Adolis García hit a grand slam to highlight a seven-run fifth inning and AL West-leading Texas slugged four homers in a win over Houston.

Following his grand slam, García and Marcus Semien exchanged words with Martín Maldonado. That led to the benches and bullpens emptying. No punches were thrown in the scrum around home plate, but Maldonado and Semien were ejected.

Tempers were hot earlier in the game. Both benches were warned in the third inning after Houston's Framber Valdez hit Semien in the left shoulder with the first pitch of his at-bat. The Rangers' Andrew Heaney had hit Yordan Alvarez in the right shoulder with a pitch in the first inning.

Semien, Nathaniel Lowe and Sam Huff also homered for Texas, which avoided a three-game sweep.

Celtics' Brown ready for expectations that come with new deal

By KYLE HIGHTOWER
AP SPORTS WRITER

Boston Celtics star Jaylen Brown wants to win more than championships after inking the richest deal in NBA history.

On Wednesday, minutes after he did a ceremonial signing of the contract that will keep him a Celtics uniform and pay him a record $304 million over five years, he made it clear the next stage of his basketball career is about more than money.

"I appreciate the investment and the commitment from the Celtics," Brown told reporters. "That commitment will be felt from me here in Boston on and off the floor."

Though Brown has been eligible for the supermax extension since July 1, he said he felt the contract negotiations were straight forward throughout the process.

"From my standpoint, they understood where I came from, they understood where we came from and it was all about meeting in a place where it made sense for everybody," Brown said.

AP

Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown (7) dribbles the ball during Game 3 of the NBA basketball playoffs Eastern Conference finals against the Miami Heat, Sunday, May 21, 2023, in Miami.

Asked what he plans to do with the generational wealth that comes with his new deal, Brown said he wants to launch a project to bring "Black Wall Street" to Boston and do his part to help close the racial wealth disparity in the city that's been his home for the past seven years.

Black Wall Street was the name given to a district in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that was one of the most economically affluent areas for Black Americans during the early 1900s before it was destroyed during the 1921 race massacre.

"There's analytics that support that stimulating the wealth gap is something that could be a betterment for the entire economy," Brown said. "With the biggest financial deal in NBA history, it makes sense to talk about one, your investment in community. But two, also the wealth disparity here that nobody wants to talk about. … It's something we can all improve on."

Brown hopes that by starting new initiatives in Boston he can play a role in creating new jobs, resources and businesses to stimulate the economy and gaps he's observed working through his 7uice Foundation.

It's why he held Wednesday's news conference at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, site of 7uice's Bridge Program, which is focused on promoting science and technology education among underrepresented minority communities in high schools.

Celtics co-owner Wyc Grousbeck said Brown's motivations are exactly why the organization felt comfortable making the long-term investment it did.

"It's not just about a contract or money or playing basketball. It's about making a difference in life," Grousbeck said. "That's what Jaylen embodies to me and to my partner Steve (Pagliuca) and others and to all of us here at the Celtics. He's a true Celtic. He's a Celtic for years to come."

Grousbeck said Brown's philanthropic goals go hand in hand with the team's hopes that Brown will one of the catalysts in its quest to win an 18th NBA championship.

"This is the next step to that," Grousbeck said.

Celtics president of basketball operations Brad Stevens said the fact that Brown included the students involved with his foundation speaks to the kind of person he remembers meeting when Boston drafted him third overall in 2016.

"From the moment Jaylen's gotten here it's been about growing. It's been about getting better. It's about tackling every challenge," Stevens said. "I think that is a great separator when you're talking about a player, when you're talking about a teammate, when you're talking about a person want to be associated with and have a long-term relationship with."

Brown said he's ready for the expectations that will come on the court with his new deal.

"I look at life as stages and degrees," Brown said. "Everything that I went through throughout my career has prepared me for each stage. … I don't shy away from pressure. I know what the demand is. I know what the expectation level is. And I know the work that is required. Everything about me is about work. So I look at it as just another challenge."

Al-Hilal makes record $332M bid for France striker Mbappe

SYDNEY (AP)—After missing out on Lionel Messi, Saudi Arabian soccer team Al-Hilal made a record 300 million euro ($332 million) bid for Kylian Mbappe on Monday, an offer which could see the France striker join Cristiano Ronaldo in the oil-rich kingdom.

Paris Saint-Germain confirmed the offer for its player and has given Al-Hilal permission to open negotiations directly with Mbappe.

The 2018 World Cup winner is in a contract standoff with PSG after his decision not to take up the option of a 12-month extension on his deal. Instead, he plans to walk away as a free agent at the end of the upcoming season when he is widely expected to join Real Madrid.

PSG cut Mbappe from its preseason tour of Japan on Saturday, with the French club determined to sell him unless he can be convinced to sign a new contract.

A new deal now looks highly unlikely with relations between the 24-year-old Mbappe and PSG becoming increasingly tense.

Saudi Arabia has sought in recent years to buy its way into international sports. Besides Ronaldo, whose contract reportedly earns him up to $200 million a year, Saudi-funded LIV Golf has shaken up professional golf.

The moves are part of efforts by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to leverage the kingdom's oil wealth to provide new jobs and opportunities for Saudi Arabia's youth. However, critics have dismissed the efforts as "sportswashing," attempting to leverage professional sports to clean up the kingdom's image as it remains one of the world's top executioners and waging a yearslong war in Yemen.

U.S. intelligence agencies also believe Prince Mohammed ordered the killing and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018.

Earlier this year, Al-Hilal failed in an attempt to sign Messi, with the Argentina great choosing to join Inter Miami instead.

The bid for Mbappe would make him the most expensive soccer player in history, overtaking the $262 million PSG paid for Neymar, who joined from Barcelona in 2017.

The offer represents Saudi Arabia's most ambitious move yet as part of a determined recruitment drive to lure the game's biggest players to the country.

After Ronaldo agreed to join Al-Nassr in December, Saudi teams have gone into overdrive by targeting leading names from Europe's top leagues. Real Madrid great and current Ballon d'Or holder Karim Benzema signed for Saudi champion Al-Ittihad last month and has been joined by 2018 World Cup winner N'Golo Kante.

Roberto Firmino, Kalidou Koulibaly and Marcelo Brozovic are among other big names to head to the lucrative Saudi league, which is making mega-money offers to players in a bid to raise the profile and quality of soccer in the country.

While that was not enough to convince Messi to join Al-Hilal after leaving PSG, more stars are expected to follow in the footsteps of Ronaldo and Co.

Premier League players like Riyad Mahrez and Jordan Henderson have recently been linked with moves from Manchester City and Liverpool, respectively.

The reported salaries and commercial deals for Ronaldo, Benzema and Kante could earn them a combined figure of nearly $1 billion.

Mbappe has said he plans to see out the final year of his contract, which would leave PSG powerless to prevent him from leaving for nothing next year.

The French champions, who are owned by Qatar Sports Investments, have already seen Messi leave for nothing in return and are determined to earn a fee for a player who is widely considered one of the few capable of taking over from Messi and Ronaldo as soccer's biggest star.

His omission from PSG's touring squad in Japan raises the possibility that he could be benched next season if he refuses to sign a contract or agree to leave during this transfer window.

No new details on Bronny James 2 days after cardiac arrest

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The family of Bronny James, the hospital and the university made no new public comments about his health Wednesday, two days after the 18-year-old son of NBA superstar LeBron James went into cardiac arrest during a basketball practice with his team at the University of Southern California.

LeBron James was spotted by photographers entering Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where Bronny James is being treated after the incident Monday morning at USC's campus arena.

Bronny James was in stable condition Tuesday, and patients who experience an unlikely cardiac arrest often undergo numerous tests over multiple days to determine the cause. He spent only a brief time in intensive care — a positive sign for his long-term recovery from the frightening episode.

Bronny's 16-year-old brother, Bryce, posted a photo of the two on his Instagram story, along with a heart. Bryce James is also a top basketball prospect who already has received Division I scholarship offers.

It's too soon to know how Bronny's episode will affect his basketball career, since it largely depends on the underlying causes of the cardiac arrest. LeBron James has been an active supporter of his two sons' basketball dreams, even using his off days during the Los Angeles Lakers' season to fly several hours to attend their games.

LeBron James has repeatedly said that he even hopes to play in the NBA with Bronny, who couldn't join the league until the fall of 2024 at the earliest. LeBron would be entering his 22nd NBA season at that point — matching Vince Carter for the longest career in league history — with his 40th birthday looming in December 2024.

"My last year will be played with my son," James said. "Wherever Bronny is at, that's where I'll be. I would do whatever it takes to play with my son for one year."

LeBron James has slightly downplayed that determination more recently: After he broke Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career scoring record last February, he acknowledged that playing alongside his son in the NBA is his dream, but might not be Bronny's dream.

SBL: Hopeful to get tournament started

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Due to the late July rainy weather during the week, the 2023 SBL-UOG Baseball Friendship Tournament has yet to see some action at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Baseball Field, but Saipan Baseball League president Jay Santos is hopeful they'll get things going.

Santos said in an interview yesterday afternoon that he hopes games are able to be played either that night or tonight.

The University of Guam Tritons is set to compete with the Top 2 teams of the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League—the undefeated Cardinals and the Junior Nationals, along with the SBL All-Stars team composed of players from teams that didn't make the playoffs.

If last night's games went through, it would've been between the UOG Tritons versus the SBL All-Stars; tonight would be UOG versus the Cardinals; for tomorrow, Saturday July 29, the Tritons should face off against the Junior Nationals, followed by the Tritons and the SBL-All Stars on Sunday, July 30.

Santos said that he feels bad about canceling the tournament due to the weather. The tourney was supposed to start on Tuesday. As for the teams competing, he said, "Our first place Cardinals I know would be very competitive. I know all our teams would be very competitive if we can finally get some games going."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The University of Guam Tritons baseball team poses for a photo with Saipan Baseball League president Jay Santos, standing in front, fifth from left, during their luncheon with Tan Holdings' Catherine Attao-Toves, sixth from left, and Alex Sablan, second from left, at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan yesterday.

He added, "But Guam's got a very strong team as well and a number of their players are from the Guam national team that was here for the Mini Games last year. We just hope the weather will cooperate so we can get this going."

SBL and UOG plan to make this tournament an annual event.

Santos then thanked the UOG Tritons head coach Roke Alcantara Jr. for reaching out to get a tournament between SBL and UOG going.

As for the baseball youth clinic, it should still go on as scheduled today if the weather permits. The schedule for today is from 1pm to 4pm open for 16- to 21-year-olds and on Saturday, July 29, for U12 from 9am to 11am; and for U15 from 12pm to 2pm.

Santos is also thankful to the Tan Siu Lin Foundation for hosting a luncheon for the UOG Tritons team along with Santos and Herman Kintol, tournament director, at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan yesterday.

Santos thanked Catherine Attao-Toves, Tan Holdings vice president for Corporate Affairs and Human Resources; Alex Sablan, Tan Holdings vice president; and Merlie Tolentino executive director of the TSL Foundation for the luncheon and to Tan Holdings for their support of baseball in the CNMI.

Along with them, Santos thanked their other sponsors IT&E, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, MARPAC, and TakeCare Insurance. "If it wasn't for all these organizations, we wouldn't be as successful as we are now with baseball on island."

Rollers holds first inter-club scrimmage

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The 670 Rollers Basketball Club continued its summer program by scrimmaging among their age group teams last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Club founder and head coach Joe Diaz said participating age group teams were the 10-and-under team coached by Leo Naraja and Matt Iguel, the 12-and-under squad coached by T.J. Factor, and his own 14-and-under quintet.

Aside from him and the three Rollers coaches, the fathers of Rollers players like Juan Camacho, James Matsumoto, and Bobby Coldeen also tried their hand in coaching during the scrimmage.

The Rollers teams during the scrimmage were named after NBA teams like the Lakers, Suns, and Mavericks with the latter eventually winning the unofficial championship of the one-day scrimmage.

The Rollers coach extended his gratitude to club coaches, including J.P. Cruz of the 18-and-under team, as well as Rollers board members for keeping the club going all these years and despite all the challenges.

Diaz also took the opportunity to thank the Tan Siu Lin Foundation for allowing them the use of the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

670 Rollers Basketball Club practices at their home court at the Mt. Carmel School Gymnasium in Chalan Kanoa. The 18-and-under team practices from 5:30pm to 7:30pm every Monday. Tuesday from 5pm to 6:30pm is the turn of the 13-and-under team. The 10-and-under team practices every Wednesday from 5pm to 6:30pm, while Thursday from 5pm to 6:30pm belongs to the 13-and under squad and 6:45pm to 8:15pm to the 16-and-under team.

Diaz said the 670 Rollers Basketball Club is supported by the following: House Speaker Edmound Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Roy Ada (R-Saipan) and Rep. Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

670 Rollers Basketball Club's combined 14-and-under and 12-and-under basketball team.

For more information about the 670 Rollers Basketball Club, call Diaz at 285-4141 or email him at joediaz41@gmail.com.

RELAY

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Deleon Guerrero said the best part of his experience in Japan was the adrenaline rush he felt "while getting on the diving block knowing that all of my loved ones get to see our flag being broadcasted live."

Batallones, for her part, said it felt more than amazing to beat the record by so much. She was part of the team in Budapest that held the old mark.

"This was my first race and it went very well so I'm feeling positive about my next race. It feels amazing that I got to beat the record with my team. I'm very grateful for their great attitude we competed in. I was a little bit nervous at the start, but knowing my team is right by my side made me feel more at ease. It was a great experience and I can't wait to break more records."

As for the round-the-clock training they've been undergoing in Japan, Batallones said it's a sacrifice you just have to make.

"Training is not always easy, especially trying to get used to the distance. It's longer than what we have back home and it takes a while to get used to. I try to focus more on getting used to the distance, my form, and my pace. Swimming my race pace in the practice pool back home is way different than my race pace in a 50m long course pool. It's definitely not easy but I know I can handle it."

Last but not the least, Litulumar shared her teammates' confidence that they were destined to break the record.

"I did not feel surprised because I know that we practiced hard enough to surpass that record."

And speaking of Litulumar, aside from competing in the medley relay she also swam the 50m backstroke yesterday and came close to breaking a local age group record, too.

"Her target was to break the CNMI 15-16 record. It's 33.73. But unfortunately, she didn't reach it yesterday. The difference was only 0.5 seconds! It was unfortunate but it shows she had the ability to break the CNMI record finally. We are so looking forward to her Pacific Games stint!" said Kimura.

Like her coach, Litulumar is encouraged with the progress she made in Fukuoka.

"My first race was alright. I couldn't accomplish the time I was aiming for but it was close. I will do my best to train even harder," she said.

As for finally swimming in a standard pool, she said she's finally adjusting to it.

"I got the hang of it because we came a week early to train to get the feel of the long course compared to the backyard pool we are used to."

Assistant coach Christian Villacrusis said Litulumar swam well and it was great that the team got the medley record.

"Shoko did good. The team also beat their seed time and set a new record! I expected them to swim well because they have been working so hard these past few months!"

Aside from Kimura and Villacrusis, Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh comprises the rest of Team NMI in Fukuoka, Japan.

The NMISF would also like to thank the following for helping the swimmers and coaches fund their trip to Japan: The CNMI Legislature, specifically Speaker Edmund S. Villagonez (Ind-Saipan) and Reps. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan), Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan), and Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), Saipan Mayor Ramon B. Camacho, Aqua Resort Club, BAB Restaurant, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Dae Jang Kum Restaurant, Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods, Gold's Gym Saipan, Islander Rent-a-Car, Korean House Restaurant, Lohas Massage, Mobil Oil Marianas,Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Pacific Quick Print, Shell Marianas Corp., Saipan World Resort, Zen Corp., Zoom Chicken, Saipan Swim Club parents, Tsunami Saipan parents, and all who supported NMISF's fundraising activities.

CAROL

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the Asia/Oceania Group III tie this week. The event is being played on clay at Sri Lanka's Tennis Association Courts in Colombo.

Sinclair is joined in the team by Vanuatu's Clement Mainguy, Tahiti's Gillian Osmont, Tonga's Matavao Fanguna with Vanuatu's Aymeric Mara serving as player/captain.

There are eight nations competing in the Asia/Oceania Group III tie, all vying for promotion to Group II: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Pacific Oceania, Jordan and Vietnam. They are divided into two groups with Pacific Oceania the top seed in Group B.

TEAM

From page 36

team in a blowout, 69-106.

The men of Team Marianas fought tooth and nail to be up by 1 point at the end of the first quarter, 19-18, but crumbled throughout the rest of the game when Pohnpei put out all their stops—from their no-miss offense to their hardcore defensive maneuvers.

With the crowd rumbling the gymnasium with their cheers with each shot made from both teams—it seemed more like a huge championship game than a friendly match.

The slick and speedy Coby Santos of Team Marianas was fouled many times as he was mostly the target of Pohnpei's defense. Even with that, he ended the game with 16 points. Frankie Satur was the only other Team Marianas player with double digits with 11.

As for Pohnpei, although they've already played twice in a row before this game, didn't seem fatigued at all—but rather, cranked up the heat of their game even more.

With control of the ball most of the game, Pohnpei reduced Team Marianas to just a little over 15 points per quarter as they smashed the ball from Team Marianas' layup attempts and stole the ball on the pass—too quick for Team Marianas to catch up to.

Connor Boylan ended the game for Pohnpei with 19 big points, while Oppa Miingi shot 14, and Hart Yamada made 12.

Since the start of the tourney on Monday until Wednesday, NMI has won a total of two games, while Pohnpei scooped up three wins.

Last night was the start of the 3×3 double-elimination games sanctioned by FIBA. Today is the continuation at 5:30pm.

First Game

Team Marianas Women 58 – Pangelinan 20, Travilla 8, Kautz 8, Younis 6, Lumabi 5, Alegre 3, Bucalig 3.

Pohnpei Women 42 – Seneres-Amor 10, Vanessa Helgenber 9, Edward 7, Youngstrom 5, Adams 3, Ekiek 3, Nanpei 3, Joakim 2.

Scoring by quarters: 7-8, 25-18, 43-34, 58-42.

Second Game

Pohnpei Men 106 – Boylan 19, Miingi 14, Yamada 12, Helgenberger 9, Pluhs 9, Torres 8, Elias 8, Aguon 6, Mallarme 6, Ioanis 5, Jack 5, Primo 3, Shoniber 2.

Team Marianas Men 69 – C. Santos 16, Satur 11, Sablan 9, Raquepo 6, Aranda 5, Villarin 5, Castro 5, Fitial 3, K. Santos 3, Aldan 2, Tapay 2, Garcia 2.

Scoring by periods: 19-18, 34-51, 50-82, 69-106.

Captain Paul has one left in fishing bucket list

The captain of the grand prize-winning boat in the 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament only needs to take home the total weight category to call it a fishing career.

Botin Saba skipper Paul Roberto said he has won all categories in the fishing derby with the exception of the total weight category.

"I've won first place in wahoo, mahi mahi, yellowfin, tuna, and second place in the other different categories. This is the first time I've won the grand prize. I wanna win total weight then I can retire as a captain and he (son James) can have my boat," he told *Saipan Tribune* following the awards banquet last Monday night at Kensington Hotel Saipan.

The elder Roberto also said prior to landing the 140.2-lb billfish last Sunday that ultimately won them $8,900—$3,000 for the grand prize plus the $5,900 side bet—he and the crew of *Botin Saba* caught and then lost a couple of large billfish on Day 1 Saturday.

This made it doubly important for his crew to hold on to the winning billfish that only beat the 6pm cutoff time by 20 minutes.

"When we caught it, I told my guys don't lose the fish because if you do I'm gonna make you swim in there," said the 57-year-old who has over four decades of fishing experience.

Roberto said winning the grand prize was made more improbable since they hooked the billfish aboard their miniscule 16-foot boat.

He did say they have a 24-foot boat, but wanted to use the *Botin Saba* because it was handed to him by his dad and once he finally completes the local fishing derby's version of the cycle, he will pass on *Botin Saba* to his son.

MARK RABAGO

Botin Saba skipper Paul Roberto and crew pose with the oversized airplane ticket to the All Micronesian Tournament in Majuro, Marshall Islands presented by Marianas Pacific Distributors during the 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament awards banquet last Monday night at Kensington Hotel Saipan. Also in photo are Saipan Fishermen Association officials and MARPAC resident manager Guy Pudney.

"I'm trying to get the grand prize and total weight so I can close the book and he can be the captain. We actually bought a new and larger boat together and named it *Botin Saba II,"* he said.

Meanwhile, Marianas Pacific Distributors shocked everyone in attendance during the awards banque by announcing that Roberto and company won the other surprise side bet of the derby—two all-expense paid airline tickets to take part in the All Micronesia Tournament in Majuro, Marshall Islands.

"It's our 50th anniversary so we wanted to do something a little special…We're trying to build camaraderie among all the fishermen in Micronesia and there's one thing that all the derbies have in common in Micronesia is that we're all a sponsor of them. So, we're gonna fly the captain and whoever his angler is down to the All Micronesia fishing derby in Majuro and they will represent the CNMI. Good luck and hope you'll win but the most important thing is you build that bridge so that hopefully will get some fishermen from down there to come up here to enjoy the Saipan International Fishing Tournament," said MARPAC resident manager Guy Pudney.

If all goes well, Pudney added that aside from the All Micronesia Tournament, they will also sponsor the winner of the Saipan International Fishing Tournament to other fishing derbies around the region.

"Hopefully in the future we might do something where we fly the winners to also enjoy the Palau fishing derby. So stay tuned!" he said.

Dizon, 'Pacman' top age group

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Veteran riders Nap Dizon and Rio "Pacman" Jacob lead the age group winners of the 3rd Annual Race for a Cause Bike Race last Sunday in Marpi.

The 47-year-old Dizon won the 45-49 age group in the road bike division after completing the long course route from the former Mariana Resort & Spa to Banzai Cliff, La Fiesta Mall, Bird Island, Suicide Cliff, and back in a time of 51:54.

He was followed by Harold Balana in 52:10 and Elmer Esdrelon in 59:19.

Dizon dedicated his age group triumph to organizers of the Race for a Cause Bike Race, namely Wilfredo Barbo.

"I'm happy to be a part of this good cause as proceeds from this event will go to those in need. What little help we give hopefully will make a difference in their lives," Dizon said in Filipino.

Lo Manalo, meanwhile, reigned supreme in the below 40 division after crossing the finish line in 54:27. Second place went to Roy Hernandez in 59:55 and Bernard Laborce in 1:00:03.

In the 40-44 division, Jay-Ar Barrios again led the pack with a time of 52:55. He was pursued by Rod Gonzales who finished in 54:58.

Leo Baetiong ruled the 50-54 age group after cycling to Banzai Cliff in 54:10, followed by Bob Ferrer and Ricky Suba in 54:52 and 55:10, respectively.

In the 55-59 division, Noel Altamirano was the man to beat after clocking in at 58:13. He was pursued by Romeo Ampit in 59:55 and Bernard Laborce in 1:00:03.

Pax Guevarra also proved that age is just a number after finishing *numero uno* in the 60-and-above category with a time of 58:58. Edgar Abalos was second in 1:00:53, while Ponce Corotan was third in 1:01:07.

Jacob, who has uncanny resemblance to eight division-boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, topped the 45-49 division in the mountain bike division with a time of 59:51.

Rosalio Quinto was second in 1:05:56 with Manny Basa taking third in 1:09:56.

Matt Buenabajo, Angeles Alvarez, and Florencio Antonio were the lone participants in their age groups and automatically won their divisions.

Buenabajo topped the 50-54 in 1:08:48; Alvarez the 55-59 in 1:05:58; and Antonio the 60-and-above in 1:12:25.

In the mountain bike short course race, Erwin Calage was without peer after finishing in 24:17. John John Hugo was second in 27:07, while Renato Gaviola closed out the Top 3 in 29:55.

Ruel Nava, meanwhile, won a two-horse race in the road bike short course after registering a time of 22:25. He beat Joel Ejercito's time of 26:29.

The short course encompassed the route from the former Mariana Resort to La Fiesta, to the "Triangle," and back.

Coordinator Willy Barbo said a total of 50 bikers took part in this year's Race for a Cause Bike Race. He thanked everyone for contributing to a good cause, saying that part of the proceeds from the event will go to a diabetic patient undergoing dialysis three times a week at the Commonwealth Health Center. He added that elderly in the Philippines will also get a grocery package from him.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nap Dizon, middle, topped the 45-49 age group of the road bike division of the 3rd Annual Race for a Cause Bike Race last Sunday in Marpi. Also in photo is third place Elmer Esdrelon, left, and second place Harold Balana.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rio "Pacman" Jacob, middle, topped the 45-49 age group of the mountain bike division of the 3rd Annual Race for a Cause Bike Race last Sunday in Marpi.Also in photo is third place Manny Basa, left, and second place Rosalio Quinto.

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SBL: Hopeful to get tournament started.

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Sports

Captain Paul has one left in fishing bucket list.

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Relay team breaks mixed medley record

Aleksenko

Deleon Guerrero

Litulumar

Batallones

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI national swimming team reset the Commonwealth record in the mixed 400m relay in the 20th FINA World Championships last Wednesday in Fukuoka, Japan.

Isaiah Aleksenko (backstroke), Jakey Deleon Guerrero (butterfly), Maria Batallones (breastroke), and Shoko Litulumar (freestyle) completed the medley relay in 4:31.93 to eclipse the previous record of 4:37.91 set by Juhn Tenorio, Maria Batallones, Taiyu Akimaru, and Jinie Thompson in the 2022 FINA World Championships in Budapest, Hungary.

CNMI national coach Hiroyuki Kimura is happy that the team accomplished one of their missions in Fukuoka.

"Our team's target was to beat the time of the previous CNMI national team's medley relay in Budapest and we did it!" he said.

Aside from setting a new standard, Aleksenko, Deleon Guerrero, Batallones, and Litulumar also managed to beat the times of their swimming rivals in the region as Papua New Guinea (4:32.31), Federated States of Micronesia (4:36.96), Tonga (4:39.42), and Guam (4:40.68) all finished with slower times.

Aleksenko is thrilled that Team NMI is leaving Fukuoka with a new record.

"It feels good. I didn't really get the time I wanted but this isn't my main event so I'm pretty happy with the results," he said.

Deleon Guerrero echoed his teammate's sentiments and then some when he said, "It feels awesome to finally have a record to my name."

He added that teamwork, dedication, and sacrifice over the past couple of months has led to the record-breaking moment.

"It was definitely worth it!"

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Carol, Pacific Oceania 3-0 in Billie Jean King Cup

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI's Carol Lee and her Pacific Oceania teammates are currently perfect in the 2023 Billie Jean King Cup after beating Singapore on the hardcourts at the National Tennis Centre last Wednesday in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

According to the Oceania Tennis Federation, Lee and Papua New Guinea's Violet Apisah took care of business by winning their singles matches to give the Islanders an unassailable 2-0 lead in the tie before losing in the dead doubles.

Lee took out Sue Yan Tan in straight sets, 6-2, 6-1, while Apisah did it better by stopping Audrey Tong, 6-1, 6-1. Singapore then won the doubles when Tan and Vickie Wei Kei beat Lee and Patricia Apisah, 6-4, 6-1.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI's Carol Lee, third from right, is currently seeing action with the Pacific Oceania team in the 2023 Billie Jean King Cup in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Last Tuesday, Lee and company improved to 2-0 after upsetting top seeds Chinese-Taipei, 2-1.

Violet Apisah, again playing No. 2, got the tie off to the perfect start beating Hao-Ching Chan, 2-6, 7-5, 7-5. Then Lee topped the Chinese-Taipei's No. 1 player, Pei-Chi Lee, ranked 450 in the world, in straight sets 7-5, 7-5.

Pacific Oceania started its campaign in the Billie Jean King Cup on the right foot after beating fourth seed Hong Kong last Monday, 3-0.

Violet Apisah again gave Pacific Oceania a 1-0 lead after topping Man Ying Maggie Ng, 7-5, 6-2. Lee then took down the former Crown Colony's No. 1, Ho Ching Wu, 6-4, 6-3, to clinch the Islanders' debut. Violet Apisah and Lee then combined in the doubles to beat the same two players, 7-6 (10), 6-2.

Also in the lineup for Pacific Oceania are PNG's Abigail Tere-Apisah and Fiji's Saoirse Breen. William O'Connell is coaching the team.

A total of 12 nations are taking part in the 2023 Billie Jean King Cup. Joining Pacific Oceania (3-0) in Pool A are the aforementioned Chinese-Taipei (2-1) and Hong Kong (2-1), Singapore (1-2), Pakistan (1-2), and Guam (0-3).

Pool B has New Zealand, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia.

Meanwhile, the CNMI's Colin Sinclair-led Pacific Oceania Davis Cup Team currently is in Colombo, Sri Lanka to play in

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Team Marianas split Day 3 of basketball friendlies

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Day 3 of the 2023 NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games resulted in a split between the two delegations as Team Marianas women and men laced up against a rough and tumble Pohnpei team.

Team Marianas women put on quite a show for a sellout crowd in the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium on Wednesday night for a win over Pohnpei, 58-42.

Coming back from a loss the night before, Destiny Pangelinan found herself in the middle of the action in this game as she sought vengeance against a combative Pohnpei women's roster.

Pangelinan doubled down in this game as she just came off an injury the night before, but still managed to finish in double digits with 20. Still heavily defended like the last game, Pangelinan had to fight her way through to the basket and as a result was fouled multiple times.

With Team Marianas down by 1 heading into the second quarter, they regrouped and found their rhythm and ended the quarter up by 7 points, 25-18. Kaia Travilla and Mikki Kautz then swished the net for 8 points apiece

Pohnpei's Sylvania Seneres-Amor tried to lead her team for a comeback and put up 10 points for her efforts, followed by Vanessa Helgenber's 9 points, but it was just not enough to stop the momentum of Team Marianas.

The women of Team Marianas clinched the win with a clean 58-42 final score.

Team Marianas men, on the other hand, lost to a more dominant Pohnpei men's

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LEIGH GASES

Team Marianas' Coby Santos gets the ball smacked out of his hand by Pohnpei's Glen Torres during during Day 3 of the 2023 NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games in a raucous Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium Wednesday night.